The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Bishop Lajos Ordass:

The Rejected Invitation

Daniel Wm. O'Connor, Jr. • Adult Bible Class

John O. Mellin • 'What of the Night?'

Lawrence L. Gruman • Fellow Actors

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Thomas Taylor Faichney • Beachhead in Palestine

William F. Keucher • God at Man's Corner

ORVA LEE ICE • THE PREACHER'S SIN

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Pulpit Post

Desegregation

SIR: The sermon "Christians and Desegregation," by D. Perry Ginn (Nov.), is one of the finest I have ever read anywhere—especially so because Mr. Ginn is himself a southerner and had the courage to preach the sermon in a southern church.

JOHN T. BEERS.
Methodist Church,
Burlington, Pa.

Making Money

SIR: Is there any opportunity of having in leaflet form the article "Make Money and Kill Your Church" (Nov.)? I am sure many ministers are having the same experience in regard to this matter.

WILLIAM H. HILL.
First Congregational Church,
Gilbert, Iowa.

SIR: The article "Make Money and Kill Your Church" deals with a problem I have witnessed many times in the many years I have been a church member. I have often been isolated by the women's organizations for disapproving and refusing to help in their money-making projects.

MRS. C. A. KNUTSTROM.
Hastings, Nebr.

SIR: I want to commend you on publishing your article by George C. Stuart, "Make Money and Kill Your Church." It is the best thing I have seen in a long time. I hope it will have a larger circulation than that of The Pulpit.

I am sure this thing of serving dinners, holding bazaars and the like is doing just what the author says. I have been trying to tell the women of my church that for three years but can't seem to make much impression. I hope you will make reprints of the article. If not I would like to have permission to reprint it in my parish paper.

EVAN ROUTH.
Christian Church,
Laurens, Iowa.

[*If the demand is great enough we will issue a reprint of this article. Readers who are interested should write us, indicating how many copies they could use.—Ed.*]

Bake Sale

SIR: Margaret Fishback Antolini's lines on the school and church fair, "Round Trip" (Oct.), brought memories of my own past and prompted the rhyme which follows:

Or, snooping forsooth
In the bakery booth,
To find there your pie
That no one would buy.
Not much wrong with it—just
A too-soggy crust.
Meringue a bit runny?
Does look rather funny!
In utter dejection
You snitch this confection,
And without waiting for bids
Dish it out to the kids.

FRANCES SCHROERLUKE.
Rowena, Texas.

THE JANUARY 1957 PULPIT
will be a big, 48-page bonus issue

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

LUME XXVII | DECEMBER 1956 | No. 12

Memo:

I HOPE that at least some American Christians had a hard time getting through Sunday, Noember 4, 1956. Because hundreds, maybe thouds, of Hungarian Christians didn't get through t day at all. It was to have been a Sunday of special thanksgiving in all the churches of Hungary. The revolution of a few days before was apparently r, and freedom's impromptu protest seemed to ve swept the field. Oh, what a day that was going be in the churches! American church people uld have been right at home in the preparations t must have gone forward. For by one of the tographical hops and skips which abound in ngary's relations to the rest of the world, the ngarian church and the American church are ke enough to erase the continent and ocean beeen them.

There are other such fascinating anti-geographi- juxtapositions in Hungary. The unfathomable ngarian language, for instance, has no relative all the families of languages except in Finland. e architecture and midsummer atmosphere of ngarian valley towns have their duplicates only the sleeply, crumbly-stucco squares and streets Latin America. The Hungarian feeling for freem is far more Helvetian than Balkan.

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But the arrestingly unexpected discovery for the rchman is the frequent similarity between Amern and Hungarian churches. The likeness may not deep, but it is there on the surface in homely ngs like the parish organizations; in little details e the importance of the flower committee for nday morning services; in the recognition that quent food is the most efficient oil for smoothing l soothing the church machinery; in the casual l familiar affection between believers, not often countered in countries of austerer churchmanp; in the slowness with which congregations ve the church, every man apparently wanting to ose it."

It was not hard for American churchmen to feel home when they visited Hungary this summer the meeting of the Central Committee of the rld Council of Churches. How could it be when tables were regularly spread with food and drink ought up to the hotel by different parishes and rch people who had little to spare for themselves gave lavishly for their guests? How could it be when congregations joined to make sure every visitor had a gift to take home from the looms and kilns in Hungarian cottages? How could it be when the church services were so familiar, and when the Ladies Aid ladies were on hand before and after each service, and when their coffee was so hot and good?

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The hard part was leaving, remembering the church people who so obviously hated to see the visitors go and who had so many messages to send out by them; remembering the churchmen who stayed so loyal and yet who made silence so eloquent of both sorrow and sturdiness; remembering the brightness and beauty of seminary students waving good-by, running a moment beside the buses that took us to the world outside, the world their studies should have been taking them to, the world they could hardly know well enough to dream about; remembering the townspeople, dragging through the lackluster days which are routine under tyranny and terror; remembering the high cabinet minister and his bitter, secret despair that the terrible regime knew all the time it represented only 5 per cent of the people.

All that is what has made headlines since almost beyond bearing. Those dear, valiant people are the ones who finally could not take one more minute of the brutality and boredom which is communism's "new life." In one blazing day they reintroduced humanity into their nation's politics. Let pundits say they went too far—that is what distant, insulated people can say. The fact is that there could be no stopping. Righteousness, so hideously wronged so long, snapped back and could not be stayed halfway.

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So the good people, the desperate people, shot it out, and died. And for those few glorious days, truth and justice and freedom were on top again. The church cleaned house while bullets were still in the air. False leaders were told off and read out—but not purged as it had been their habit to purge. And plans were made for that thanksgiving service on November 4.

At dawn that day the tanks of the foreign butchers blasted out the fragile freedom which was to have been celebrated. The men and women who were ready to sing the anthems, who were organized to usher the crowding congregations, who had

(Continued on page 21)

Adult Education Program Offers
A Challenge to the Church

THE ADULT BIBLE

PAUL was striving to show the superiority of the gospel of Christ over the Jewish law when he declared in Galatians 3:20, "Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one." Several hundred interpretations of the passage have been offered, and still we do not know what really was in Paul's mind. Often in his letters Paul strove valiantly to clarify his thought, but his words remained difficult and sometimes obscure.

For the church, as for Paul, one of the major problems has always been communication: how to make Christian theology, and especially the Scriptures, understandable to laymen. It was not enough for Paul—and it is not enough for the ministry of our day—to know and to believe. The ministry must communicate what it knows and therefore why it believes.

In a culture in which the complexities of science are more or less common knowledge, in a culture which maintains that it has derived its fundamental standards and code of ethics from the Christian religion, there are comparatively few in our congregations who know or are able to quote or even paraphrase the sections of Scripture which inspired this code. Few can locate at will the great passages of comfort, reassurance and strength which were so readily available to the average Christian of two generations ago. Still fewer know anything of the ancient Near East, its philosophies and its religious presuppositions which had such great effect upon the development of our Scriptures. How many Christians today are aware of the findings of modern Protestant biblical scholarship and the more profound understanding of Scripture which this scholarship has made imperative?

Poorly Informed Membership

That this basic lack of information exists is due largely to a failure in the program of the average Protestant church. If the dynamics and inspiration of Christian living are again to be derived from the Bible as historically they have been in every generation since the Reformation, then there is an impelling need to rediscover and revitalize the teaching aspect of the ministry. Today we are acutel faced with this problem of communication, and o solution lies in the establishment of a permane adult Bible class to become an integral part of t education program in every local church. By su a class I do not mean one which is concerned mai with the problem of making the subject materi popular, a class in which the main interests a attendance competitions and big-name speaker rather the need is for a continuous, inspiring a challenging experience in which large groups of la men may receive accurate, reliable information co cerning the meaning and content of their Scripture

Sermon Alone Is Inadequate

Work in this area is being done in some pulpi through the medium of expository preaching. B the sermon should not have biblical exegesis as i primary purpose; rather, it must fill the broad need of providing a faith to live by, comfort for t time of sorrow and depression, and, in the words Charles Reynolds Brown's Lyman Beecher lectur of 1922, "warning and rebuke for those who are the path . . . confirmation and guidance for tho who are faced aright." The sermon is necessary a for its functions unparalleled, but it is insufficie to serve as the total adult education program of t church.

Many churches also offer an adult church scho class on Sunday morning. However, this too has i shortcomings and difficulties. The heavy Sund morning schedule of the minister in many situatio makes it impossible for him to teach; the class therefore are entrusted to interested and dedicat laymen. Well-meaning and helpful as these teache may be, they often have insufficient knowledge a training. When we send our children to school demand well-trained, professional leadership. W seek to have them learn the three R's from one w is not only informed concerning the content of t subject but is also trained in its presentation. this generation, when millions of young people e joy the advantages of a college education, we d mand that our children have the best; and it is less important that we demand the best for ou selves.

The adult Bible education program of the chur is as important as education in other fields. It d serves content presented on an adult level by i formed as well as dedicated leadership. In today challenging world our adult congregations ha

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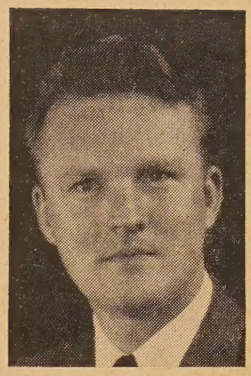
DANIEL WILLIAM O'CONNOR, JR., *bases his article on his experience as pastor of the Paramus Congregational Church, Paramus, New Jersey, which he served for five years after his graduation from Dartmouth College and Union Theological Seminary in New York. He is now working toward a Ph.D. degree in literature of the Bible at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary.*

By Daniel William O'Connor, Jr.



LASS TODAY

yed a higher level of education than ever be-
, and they are absorbing appeals made in intel-
ual terms by every other field of learning. Is it
time that the church also presented the content
ne Scriptures on an intellectual as well as inspir-
nal level? The teaching function of the Chris-
minister is too often eclipsed by the pressures
dministrative details, a number of which can
should be delegated. For in the last analysis the
lt education program rises or falls upon the min-
's recognition of its importance and his willing-
to devote time and energy to it.
it possible to activate such a program? I would
to cite as a positive illustration my former par-
the Congregational Church in Paramus, New
ey, where this emphasis served the need and
e a difference in the spiritual life of the con-
ation. The church, which celebrates its sixth
versary this month, was organized in 1950 when
mus was a town of approximately 6,500 peo-
A building boom in the next five years doubled
population. During this period the church re-
ed into membership five hundred men and
ien, most of whom were under forty-five years
ge and few of whom had had a college educa-
. With the expansion of the church activities,
need for a study program was recognized. It was
ced that those becoming members of the church
nded classes in church polity and denomina-
al history, and assented to the covenant, but
v little of the Bible which was the foundation
heir faith. Few were aware of more than the
t fundamental concepts or details.

Planning the Course

the fall of 1953 I circulated invitations to
nd a permanent Bible class to be started early
anuary. I explained the plan during parish calls,
ne monthly bulletin, through pulpit announce-
ts and in group meetings. A number of difficul-
were encountered as will be the case in all par-
. Every one of our families had small children,
sprawling town had few sidewalks, and most of
husbands used the family car for transporta-
during the day. To deal with these and other
lems, a questionnaire was sent to every home.
lly it was decided that a baby-sitting service
ld be provided and transportation was ar-
ed. Tuesday morning from 9:30 to 10:30 was
d to be the most convenient time for the
en. In some places an evening class for both
men and women is feasible. However in a community such as Paramus, made up almost entirely of young couples with children, separate classes are almost the only practicable solution. Our first experiment thus included a morning class for women and an evening class for men.

A more particular set of problems also presented themselves to the minister. What ought to be the scope of the study? What materials were available? What should be the mode of presentation? As a result of discussions with members of the parish, it seemed that what was wanted was an experience that would challenge and inform as well as inspire. The class did not want the material to be watered down or put into story form. They wanted to learn, not to be entertained.

Continued Interest

It was recognized that few adults will take notes. Therefore, they must have a commentary in their hands during the lecture and later at home—one not too detailed or technical, and, more important, one which is inexpensive. The answer to all these requirements was found in the annotated Bible series published by Harper. These paper-bound commentaries are now available for the major and minor prophets, Matthew and Mark. For our first course we chose the Gospel of Mark, the exegesis of which was done by Prof. Frederick C. Grant of the New Testament department at Union Theological Seminary in New York city.

Preparations were made for approximately a dozen people, but more than forty attended the first lecture. It was thought that the interest might lag, but only a few dropped out, and others came later to more than balance the loss. The class, which averaged from forty to fifty members, read their commentaries faithfully, attended regularly and maintained their interest.

The program called for the study of a chapter of the Gospel of Mark each week. In class an explanation was given of all the important details concerning the history and the religious principles of the time, the emerging theology, a number of variants in translation, and many of the interesting reasons for these. At the end of the hour questions were asked and answered there or at the next meeting. Occasionally a question formed the basis of a Sunday morning sermon. The study of the earliest Gospel lasted from January to June 1954.

(Continued on page 10)

The Rejected Invitation

By Bishop Lajos Ordass

Translated by Alexis Mathe

Matthew 22:1-14

READERS of the Bible often take this parable of our Lord Jesus Christ amiss, because of its ending. They wonder why was it that, though the king had sent forth his servants to the thoroughfares, he still cast out the guest who did not have a wedding garment. I shall explain it later on, but now let me say briefly this: One can attain a Christian way of life, having left behind heathen ways, sins and unbelief; or one can arrive in ragged clothes, coming from the street in a miserable state. But nobody has the right to cling to his heathen views, to the old and loathed sins; nobody has a right to long to be back in a wayside ditch again. . . .

Jesus Christ draws us to his heart by earthly images. He invites us—in fact, all humanity—to Christian life, speaking to us by parables. He invites those who are overburdened by work, tilling the soil so hard that no thought of God is left in their minds, so hard that, symbolically speaking, they are almost chained to their land. He invites those who live by the art of exchanging wares, endeavoring thus to earn their living—and maybe even a little more. God sends forth his servants to the streets to invite those who travel—men who glide elegantly in their fine cars, and those also who lash their beasts of burden harnessed to their carriages. Yes, even those are invited who harness themselves to the yoke, and beggars, and those who have forgotten their human dignity and lie in a ditch. Christ's true mercy invites everyone.

I

To what does he invite men? To Christian life.

When Jesus wants us to understand what all this means, he shows us his beautiful images. He speaks to us in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, the city built on top of a hill, the lamp, the salt, the growing plants, the mustard tree; and he seems to be particularly fond of the image of the wedding feast. Nobody should misunderstand Jesus does not promise either an overfilled stom or a befuddled drunkenness. He dwells on that t of the wedding feast on which the attention of guests is centered: the relationship between bride and the bridegroom. He shows us wha means when a young couple, greatly in love, ple themselves to each other. They are well aware— they are not blind—that work, suffering, afflicti await them, but in their heart of hearts they convinced that even if no one has yet succeede overpowering these difficulties, they two will.

Does Jesus call us to such a life? I ask you Christian life truly like that? Is the intimate un of two human beings only an alluring picture wh has nothing to do with realities? Is Christian no more than sheer poesy—an image in which Je is the bridegroom and the believer is the bride

I think that God not only commands the preac to tell what Jesus is teaching us but he dema that the preacher, through the example of his should testify to what is written in the Scriptu I am sure that everyone in this congregation— all of whom I am able to see face to face—has c in a spirit of yearning to hear the gospel, eage be certain whether one may live as a Christian the bridal state of life.

II

I am speaking after a long silence now, and I testify that there is such a trait in Christian I am not searching among memories of a long-p childhood; neither do I want to speak of the h of happiness, but of the years of silence. And I assert that there is a holy relationship betw Jesus and the believer, comparable to the relat ship between the bride and the bridegroom.

When a loving couple meet and stay toget great words are exchanged, such as "My life treasure, I love you . . . until death . . . in eterni I have heard these words from the lips of my L my dauntless and staunch Savior. He said to "My life and treasure . . ." He said it when I nobody on earth. He said it when I was wh unworthy and dejected. From the lips of my Lor and there is no mistake—I heard clearly: "I you, until death, in eternity . . ." I have no d that he called upon me and that what he said true.

On the whole, those of you who knew me in past must know that I am not sentimental. No should interpret my words in such a sense. It a holy experience, priceless, dear and eternal. was with me when everyone else deserted me. W fear shook me, he took me into his strong arms led me across a narrow plank to the shores of new beginning. In the black darkness of nigh let me see the message of dawn's arrival.

So unbounded was my Savior's love towards Yet if you ask me whether I was able to reward confidence with the sincere emotion of a fait bride, then my voice becomes faltering and I l my head. No, I was not an unwavering bride o Lord. I was the same as you are—full of hu dismay, human doubts and misery.

heran Bishop Lajos Ordass in 1948 was arrested and soned by the Communist government of Hungary on ped-up charges. Though released from prison in May he was removed from his ecclesiastical office and thus ed by the government. No more was heard from the p until late summer of 1956 when the courts of both and church absolved him of all the earlier charges and ed to him the right to preach. So, after a lapse of more eight years, early in October he was back in the pulpit. hop Ordass resumed his preaching ministry not in his hurch, the Budapest Deák Square Lutheran Church—entral and national church of Hungarian Lutherans—a small chapel on Vilmos Street at the Buda side of Iungarian capital. This small church holds hardly 400 e. Nevertheless, some 1,200 Lutherans gathered from rts of Budapest to hear the bishop, the majority listen- him through loud-speakers. Children of the parish ed the bishop with flowers when he entered the church the pastor, the Rev. Ladislas Danhauser. Otherwise, orship, conducted by Bishop Ordass alone, was a simple ay service. The Ordass family have been members of parish ever since they moved into a modest flat on by Márvány Street after the bishop's return from n. He and his family have been regular churchgoers on Sundays and church holidays, and it was Bishop ss' wish that when he began to preach again, it might this small church.

Hungary's abortive revolution, which followed soon the delivery of this sermon, Bishop Ordass was rein- l as active head of the Lutheran Church of Hungary. is issue of The Pulpit goes to press, however, word has ome from the tortured little country on the fate of the h and the churchmen who for such a few days enjoyed freedom.

xis Mathé, who translated this sermon from a friend's hand transcription, has for a decade been correspond- om Hungary for Religious News Service.

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ch experiences, however, do not refute the n of Jesus. Nay, the behavior of man's soul es the immutability of Jesus' words, because earn after him in a state of wavering when we e that we should be able to cling to our Lord when our tears testify that we cannot live ex- in the bonds of the strongest affection towards s.

III

here are people, however, who do not permit selves to be clothed in the bridal garment of s love. These men must not necessarily be cast by God's servants, because they lock themselves into the outer darkness. And so now I must rn to what I mentioned at the beginning of my on, namely that some people are unable to ac- God's severity. They maintain that it is ir- ncilable with God's love that he should have his nts cast out the man without a wedding gar- . Well, my brother, true love is not expressed smiling countenance. Love *is* consistent sever- The gospel does not tolerate, but rejects, all is dirty in life.

hen nothing is consistent in this world, there ne who is: God—in whom everything is un- ging, for whom what was a sin yesterday re- s a sin today, and in whose eyes that which holy yesterday remains holy today.

e command that makes the bridal garment ssary may mean the acceptance of gospel saint- liness too. The words of invitation may slip from your memory. No one hinders you from keeping your old rags and rejecting the wedding garment. Still my request to you is this: cast off the old rags and accept the inviting words spoken to you by Jesus himself. Let God spread the bridal garment of Christian life upon you in silent passivity.

The world dislikes people who call themselves Christians and yet have worldliness written on their very faces. Would it not be better to let this world rejoice, seeing that the testimony of the gospel radiates from your life?

My request to you is this: try to let the world rejoice!

Prayer for a Congressman

By Hugh Chamberlin Burr

Secretary, Federation of Churches, Rochester, New York

GOD of our fathers who brought them to our fair land and opened before them pathways to freedom unknown before their time, we give thee thanks for their successors, leaders of our own time who have not merely carried on the tradition of liberty but are making their own contribution to the fortifying of its bases and the widening of its influence.

We thank thee that thou dost provide men to match every occasion—men of probity and of vision, of fortitude and of patience, of ability and of character, whose humility is their pride and whose service to their country and their fellow men is its own reward.

Bless, we pray thee, this company of thy children gathered to pay tribute to one whom we have known long and loved well. And bless, in all his ways, him whom we delight to honor. Keep him in health. Strengthen in him all good purposes. Enlighten his eyes that they may continue to see life steadily and see it whole. Open his ears that he may continue to hear the multitudinous calls for assistance. Touch his mind with thine own lofty thoughts that he may think them after thee. And lay thy hand upon his heart that with simple devotion he may continue to serve thee in high places.

We thank thee for him, our friend, for his forthrightness and his industry, for his concern for the opinions of others and his capacity to stand alone, for his willingness to follow and his ability to lead, for his shining integrity and for the warmth of his friendliness. And in the days to come, wherever the path of public service may lead, wilt thou go before him to direct him and keep him and sustain him, not only tomorrow and the day after, but in all his goings out and his comings in, from this time forth and even for evermore. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[This prayer was offered at a testimonial dinner of the Rochester Bar Association.]

'Watchman, What of the Night?'

By John O. Mellin

THE joy of Christmas results from God's answering a need. Our passing, dying world demands a touch of the eternal, a glimpse of truth. A ship in a storm receives small solace and less direction from its own mast light. As any mariner knows, the mast light tosses more violently than the deck. The helmsman longs for the sight of a star breaking through the low-hanging clouds. The poet W. H. Auden writes in "A Christmas Oratorio":

> We who must die demand a miracle.
> How could the Eternal do a temporal act?
> The Infinite become a finite fact?
> Nothing can save us that is possible:
> We who must die demand a miracle.*

Christmas *is* a miracle. Its message is that God chose to dwell among us. Miracles are interesting things. No one who has not experienced one ever believes in them. How often we have said to a friend, "What happened to me yesterday certainly was a miracle." But we can tell by the look in his eye we have lost him. You have to experience a miracle to see it. Some mysterious and deep experiences in life we keep and ponder in our own hearts, but not Christmas!

Sign of Needs Fulfilled

The joy of Christmas is that God answers a need. The joy is hollow at bell and tinsel time if God has not met our deep longing. If we see the miracle, we sing, we laugh, we worship, we pray. That is, we do if we believe in stars, as the Wise Men did. Wise men still do.

This is Advent Sunday. It is for those who look for a star. For those who with Isaiah set a watchman on a mountain and call to him, "Watchman, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are!" It is for those who diligently seek, who are fed up with the box in which they live and are looking for new horizons. It is a time for those of us who are tired of watching the giddy sway of guiding lights which we have raised above our own heads. Advent is for those who cry out in hope—not despair—"Watchman, what of the night?"

Christmas is joyous, for it is a sign that God fulfills our needs. Advent is for those who look with anticipation toward fulfillment. Good Friday, in contrast, is a solemn reminder that there are many of us who do not know our need, who are unaware that that for which we long is possible—is here! we trample it; crucify it. Good Friday and Adv can be celebrated at the same time.

Both days remind us that God is faithful and are not. Life would be impossible "if no one a nothing were faithful," Dr. Buttrick once told congregation. "If this church came and went w those of us who are in it, if signed docume changed their language of themselves, if famil faces took a different appearance every hour, as we know it would cease." All of which shows importance of our being dependable.

The fact is that we are not dependable. In ten tation we falter. Sheer fatigue can cause us to "d a stitch" in terms of responsibility. The good would, we do not do; and that which we would n we do! We die leaving uncompleted tasks and met goals.

A Time of Looking Forward

We are not altogether faithful in human l Illustrated in the Christmas story by Herod's easiness at the Wise Men's call. Further emphasi by the Holy Family's necessary journey into Egy If all were up to us, if all life were merely hum life would fail. It does not fail and this is pr enough of the dependability of God. Advent is celebration of God's faithfulness. It is the time looking forward with hope.

The Hebrew tradition is the only one in which Advent celebration is possible. We read about Greeks and their gods. They were as bad as Greeks themselves and unfaithful to one anot But not the God of Abraham; not the God of Je of Nazareth, of whom Isaiah spoke when he cri

> Have you not known? Have you not heard?
> The Lord is the everlasting God,
> the Creator of the ends of the earth.
> He does not faint or grow weary,
> his understanding is unsearchable.

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*W. H. Auden, *For the Time Being* (New York: Random House, 1944). Used by permission.

JOHN O. MELLIN *in 1948 became pastor of New Yo First Presbyterian Church, where he had been associate ister for two years following his graduation from Woo College and Union Theological Seminary, New York. H a frequent speaker at college chapels as well as secon schools; a Student Christian Movement leader; a membe the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Chu U.S.A.; a trustee of various institutions and a member o boards of Christian associations at Columbia and New Y universities, the latter of which institutions this year ored him with the D.D. degree.*

was in this God that the Hebrews hoped and ed. To his showing of himself they looked for- l with eager expectation. The pessimist asks t the outlook is. The Hebrews knew the out- ; it was dark, very dark. But in the upward was confidence. Watchman, tell us of the night hat the signs of promise are.

t this time of year we hear again in Handel's orio the cheerful passages from Isaiah: "Com- ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. ak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto that her warfare is accomplished, that her in- ty is pardoned: . . . Prepare ye the way of the l, make straight" in the spiritual deserts of this "a highway for our God." For New York is usalem in a spiritual sense. The Holy City was better than any other city. It was merely a city re God was supposed to appear. It was a city re people were to wait with anticipation. Any is a holy city where people so wait.

Comfort from on High

Here in New York is where the comfort of God, mised by Isaiah, is to be found. Surrounded by hly security we seek a more lasting foundation. he midst of man-made miracles we yet need a venly miracle, to change faithless people into hful ones, to change dishonest hearts into true, hange the city's quiet pain and fear into hope, et our minds above marching soldiers, Herod's es, man's inhumanity and public deceit. No n-made miracle can do this . . . only God's mir- . In Christmas we have the event. In the words he poet, "The Eternal can become a finite fact" those of us who get up on a high mountain, lift our voices with strength and cry to one another, hold your God."

ounds foolish, doesn't it, if mature adults were act this way with confidence. But there will be ny foolish things done this season as in every day season in the past . . . many loud noises be made. Why not the foolish things which are our salvation? "The foolishness of God," said l, "is wiser than men."

Faith in Divine Promises

What of this comfort which is promised? It is not ease, else it would be of no promise to us. We e ease, although nine-tenths of the world has . But the comfort *is* for us. It is a comfort not ase but of confidence. It is confidence in God on part of the family of believers which makes this a holy city.

Holy means complete. Without faith in the real mises of God in this season our city is incom- e. Its incompleteness is everywhere manifest in raging headlines of our papers, in the family cerns of the well-to-do, in the fiscal worries of secure, in the unfulfilled longings of the ambi- us, in the loneliness of us all. Confidence in some- ng more real than the faint lights we have raised r our rocking civilization is needed. Comfort is red each aching heart, each body in pain, ough the knowledge that God is faithful. "Com- , comfort my people."

"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,/and cry to her/ that her warfare is ended," the Advent note continues comfortingly. But is our warfare ever done? Not at all. It is never accomplished in the sense of being done away with. It is only accomplished in the sense that victory is promised, not because we have strength, or are shrewd, or have the just cause. In fact it isn't even our victory at all but God's, and ours through him. It is because we cannot stray beyond his love and care with all our going and coming that victory is secure. A stable manger is pretty far astray, but he was there. There is victory in the knowledge that we may crucify truth but we cannot kill it. Here is our confidence. In this sense is our warfare ended when God comes to us.

"Cry to her that her . . . iniquity is pardoned," says the prophet. We are a guilt-ridden people. Let no one say that it is only because of the morbid gospel that we have a knowledge of guilt. Most people with guilt complexes have never been near a church and don't know the gospel. It is because we know we are unfaithful, undependable, incomplete and sinful that we feel guilty. We need pardon. The gospel is "good news" that our iniquity can be pardoned.

Man-Made Justice

Yet we live in a world where guilt is held, more and more, to be unpardonable. Behind the iron curtain one dares not make a mistake or a bad guess, for guilt is pardonless. The atmosphere is one of wakeful fear and distrust, lest a brother betray.

Each year this same kind of fear comes closer to home. We discover the meaning of pardonless guilt as more and more our own state defines acceptable morality and deals with it in terms of man-made justice rather than love. One dares not hold even the acceptable opinions for the time of year lest his guess be wrong for the future where there is no pardon. Don't think, be quiet, don't talk, and don't debate controversial issues is the prudent warning.

It was into just such an atmosphere of suspicion as this that God entered on that first Christmas.

It was the anticipation of this coming which caused Isaiah to cry unto Jerusalem that her iniquity was pardoned. There is comfort in this Advent promise that the Lord does not deal with us after our sins, or reward us according to our iniquities.

> If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities,
> Lord, who could stand?

There is comfort here in this message of deliverance; new life is promised in the name of God. That new life is the anticipation of the season.

Spreading the News

The second part of the Advent message we have already mentioned: "Prepare the way of the Lord." Seeing the promise, we are to make it known throughout the land. To this end carols are sung, gifts are given, worship is offered—announcing and acknowledging the promises.

The God who rescues us is also the God who re-

quires of us something. His judgments are sure. Mary Coleridge wrote:

I saw a stable low and very bare;
A little child in a manger—
The safety of the world was lying there . . .
And also the world's danger!

So we celebrate Advent, for we are the anticipators. We embrace its comfort and stand under its judgment. If in our rush we fail to acknowledge the season and its promise, we still stand under its judgment though we fail its comfort.

Signs of Promise

Paul Scherer tells the story of a college professor who sat reading a book in the waiting room of the hospital in which his own child was being born. The nurse came and said, "It's a boy." The professor's absent-minded retort, conditioned by many student interviews, was, "Ask him what he wants."

Even the significance of *expected* events is missed if we are not awake to their meaning. Advent is a time of conscious anticipation, or the judgment of a Good Friday falls upon us. Each day is a day of decision.

"Watchman, tell us of the night, what the signs of promise are!"

•

Our Father, may we as eager children stand on tiptoe to see the glory of thy coming. Bring to our tired world the newness and innocence of birth, that through Christ all things may be made new. This we ask in his name. Amen.

The Adult Bible Class

(Continued from page 5)

At the end of the last hour it was unanimously requested that the class be continued and that its attention be turned to the interesting and controversial Book of Genesis. Since Genesis was not available in the annotated series, we decided to use the Driver commentary which has been a standard text in theological seminaries for more than a generation. For the average layman, however, the text was found to be not only expensive but too long and detailed. The material in Genesis was covered from September through March.

At the end of this period it was decided that the class now turn its attention to the very important Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Another experiment was tried. No texts were issued and all the material was derived from lectures. As expected, few members of the class took adequate notes, and much of the material was not available for later discussion and reference. As a result of our experience, we were convinced that a short, inexpensive, reliable commentary, such as that used for the study of the Book of Mark, was the most satisfactory.

During the period that the adult Bible class met something new was injected into the life of the parish. For example, a number of times I was asked after the morning service, among other quest why had the Scripture reading in Matthew or differed from what had been understood to b teaching of Mark. Class members attended ch services more regularly and their interest was ther reflected in a new enthusiasm concerning ily reading of the Bible. In part, the purpose o class was accomplished, for these attitudes among the most important which the teaching istry of the church seeks to create and sponso

As a minister, I found this project stimula and personally rewarding. Since it became so e tive in creating an interest in and acquaint with the material of the Scriptures on the pa a number of people of my parish, I have wante tell it out abroad in the hope that other chur may benefit from a similar program.

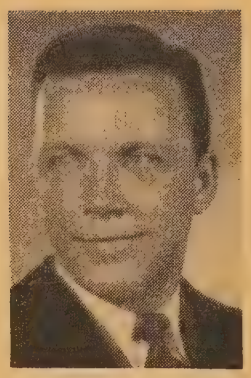
Results Noted in the Parish

The first and most necessary element in the tion of such a program is the enlistment of interest, enthusiasm and cooperation of the ister. Once the program is under way, the min should plan each lecture carefully in advanc that he is free, as teacher, to concentrate upon tails of presentation which are so important in lecture as in the sermon. The church bazaar many other activities which demand so much pastor's time are "like chaff which the wind d away," but the teaching and interpretation of Scriptures may have effects which last for erations.

In order to arouse the congregation to an aw ness of the need for adult Christian education, t must be vital, straightforward publicity thro every available medium—articles in church bull and local newspapers, announcements from the pit and in committee and group meetings. cooperation should be invited through a quest naire asking for preferences on matters such as most convenient time for meetings, transporta needs, baby-sitting difficulties, and the choice of book of the Bible (from a selected number offe whose study would be most helpful. Based on replies, an adult Bible class program can soon arranged, and a new interest in the church arou

The Church's Opportunity

The teaching ministry in the church has too often neglected in our generation. There w time when the Bible was read and studied in home, greatly emphasized in the pulpit and use the subject material of most church groups many parishes all three practices are regrett only memories of the past. This condition mus corrected if the Protestant church, built upon rock foundation of individual understanding of Scriptures, is to live in the form and be true to ideal which called it forth. Men and women now being challenged intellectually by every f of science and learning. Our newspapers and m zines are crowded with complex data from t fields, most of which is fast becoming com knowledge. Should not the church offer a prog which challenges its people to the same extent?



Good Morning, Fellow Actors

By Lawrence L. Gruman

the opening of the 16th century the whole world of astronomy was revolutionized by a n mathematician named Copernicus. The re- of his discovery so startled the world that es, professors and popes were drawn into vio- controversy. And what caused the argument? ly that Copernicus demonstrated that the n facts of planets' movement all fell into place the solar system was figured with the sun at enter and the earth off to one side. The new tation, difficult as it was to accept, was none- ss true.

Biblical Drama

the midpoint of the 20th century the church dergoing a similar revolution as new orienta- is taking place. It is based simply on the re- very of the fact that in the drama of the Chris- life the minister and laymen are the actors and is the audience. Not a very startling transition? just ask the next person you meet, "Who does cting in the church?" and the answer you will likely get is that it is the minister. Or someone have the perception to imagine that God is the r. But the real fact is that *God is the Audience!* ould have it no other way.

e the Old Testament. What is it but a vast un- ng drama of a people who are seeking to act script, written by God, interpreted in turn by arch, lawmaker, king, priest and prophet? e folk knew themselves to be *chosen* for their in the drama; this awareness accounted for intense moods of dedication and rebellion.

e the New Testament. To be sure, Jesus is the throughout the Gospels, but his unceasing on is seen to be the investing of his followers new life. He stoutly insists: "Greater works these will you do," and "The Holy Spirit s with you, and will be in you." The missions ie Twelve and the Seventy were tokens of gs to come as Jesus divested himself of the role tor and left it in the hands of his followers.

See the early church with its total commitment, with its idea of each member a minister: *Every man an actor!*

Now look about you! You see people here who have the script for the drama of life in their hands. To be sure, other men are seeking other easier-read scripts—and some are eagerly seeking to leap over the barrier into the audience. But God has reserved all the seats in the audience, and whether we will or no we are thrust onstage, center front.

So it is that when I come into the pulpit on Sunday I have these half-spoken words on my lips: "Good morning, fellow actors. . . . We are onstage together. Each of us plays an important role, and we gather now for a briefing before the next act begins. If I am required to examine the script with you, it is in the hope that some new insight will emerge before the curtain goes up on the new week!" Do not be deceived by the simplicity of this analogy. If it bears the marks of truth, it has a profound effect on every aspect of our Christian life. Let us look at three of them:

God-Given Script

First, the Bible takes on a new dimension. Very simply, this is a script with your name on it. It is *for you.* It is for you to appropriate, to memorize if you will, but in any case to apply. As Sören Kierkegaard suggests, you can read almost any passage of the script and say to yourself: "It is I." This is subjective, but you have an objective relation to the script, for you are under contract to play it out. The role you are assigned is that of being a son of God, and the contract is signed by Jesus Christ, sealed with the cross.

"Oh," you say, "this is making a lot out of nothing. My role is that of a housewife [or businessman, or teacher]. The great roles are taken by the great men and women." And right here comes the sound advice given to actors by the Russian director Stanislavsky: "There are no small parts; there are only small actors." You see, the magnificent gift of the Bible, the great script, was not given to spiritual pygmies but to people who have the promise of heroic proportions to their souls. The daily adventure of bringing God's love into a household, or Christian ethics into business, or the eternal stature of truth into the classroom, demands playing out the role of God's son.

Or perhaps you think of yourself as having no

(Continued on page 29)

VRENCE GRUMAN became pastor of the First Congre- al Church of Fairport, New York, last spring after years as chaplain and dean of men at Berea College ntucky. Following his graduation from Union Theo- l Seminary in New York he served as assistant min- o Dr. Ralph Sockman at Christ Church (Methodist), York. Congregationalist by upbringing and training, s taken a special interest in postwar European Chris- y and attended the recent Kirchentag rally.

On Being Biblically Embarrassed

By Henry Kuizenga

As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire . . . Jeremiah 36:23.

WILL you get the picture of this Bible-burning? King Jehoiakim was embarrassed. The material which Jehudi was reading before the court was a direct attack by the prophet Jeremiah upon Jehoiakim's reign as king. Not only the king's pro-Egyptian policies but his licentious paganism came in for the prophet's bitter invective. For his foolishness with Egypt, wrote Jeremiah, and even more for his wickedness with pagan gods, God would punish him and his people. Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian conqueror, would destroy Jerusalem and carry the king and his people to Babylon. "Thus says the Lord," wrote Jeremiah.

Truth Lives On

Moreover, the prophet's words were respected. The people of Jerusalem knew all about Jeremiah's views; many of the people and even Jehoiakim's princes were impressed. Jeremiah was not exactly a favorite with the people of Jerusalem. But—and especially at this point in his career—his word was respected as that of a true prophet. The news was getting around that the prophet of the Lord was predicting doom for the king and his kingdom. People were getting jittery in Jerusalem. Some of Jehoiakim's advisers, thinking it was time the king heard what Jeremiah had to say, told the king just what was happening. That is how it came about that Jehudi was reading Jeremiah's scroll before the king as he sat in his winter house before the open fire in the ninth month of the fourth year of his reign.

The atmosphere was tense. All eyes were on the king. How would he take this attack? How would he receive the word of a prophet whom all Jerusalem regarded as a spokesman for the Lord God? As Jehudi read, and the scroll slowly unwound from the one side, to be read and then rewound again on the other side, the king never interrupte nor said a word.

But to show his contempt for God and h prophet, Jeremiah, the king simply reached ov each time Jehudi completed three or four colum of the scroll; then just as these columns were abo to disappear around the right core of the scroll, th king with his penknife would carefully slash th parchment, lift out what he had just heard an drop it into the fire, leaving only the margins of th scroll to be rerolled. He kept this up as Jehudi rea until everything Jeremiah had written was cu away and burned. You can hear the princes an the courtiers, snickering at first, and then probabl bursting out into roaring laughter as the king le poor Jehudi blushing crimson and holding th margins.

That was very clever of the king, was it not? H stood up at last, smiling, and quietly ordered Jere miah and his scribe, Baruch, to be arrested an dismissed the court. Through it all Jehoiakim wa very masterful, very composed and very kingly.

But he did not get rid of the truth of Jeremiah words that easily, nor of Jeremiah either. Jere miah and Baruch eluded arrest. Then Jeremiah dic tated again to Baruch and added much that wa not included in the first roll. Soon afterward Je hoiakim died and Jerusalem fell to the Babylo nians and Jehoiakim's son was carried away t Babylon where he languished in prison until h died too. But today in our Bible we have all tha Jeremiah said and Baruch wrote, as living test mony that the truth outlives its contemners an that wisdom is justified of her children.

Judgment and Challenge

Just what is it about this scroll of Jeremiah that embarrassed Jehoiakim? What induced him t take the action which gives him a place in histor as a Bible-burner? There were no doubt other cri ics of the king's policies whom the king ignore There were doubtless thousands of critics of who the king never heard. But the princes and the pe ple insisted that Jeremiah was a prophet of Go and as such God's spokesman. To this scroll whic Baruch read, the princes and the people attache sacred significance.

Seated in his winter house before the open fir surrounded by his courtiers, every eye glued upo him while he listened to the drone of Jehudi's rea ing-voice, the king retained his usual regal bearin

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HENRY KUIZENGA, *the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary and a doctor's degree from Yale University. Before going to Ann Arbor he had been a faculty member at Princeton University and at Carroll College, had served several New Jersey churches and for three years during World War II had been an Air Force chaplain.*

deep fury boiled beneath his surface calm. book condemned him, Jehoakim. It con- d him and challenged his entire policy as Judah. Moreover, his princes and his people k this book seriously. So what! He'd show who was king. So he burned the book.

t has been the story with Bible-burners and t-killers ever since. It is the judgment upon we have been and the challenge to change ve are so that we may become what God has d for us to be—it is *that* which makes the embarrassing, its honest readers and faithful ts unpopular. For fearlessly uncovering the of the Scriptures in his day and for holding d's word as the mirror in which men might lected the disconcerting image of their own ed lives, Jesus was nailed upon his cross.

1523 William Tyndale, taking alarm at the tion of his times, resolved to translate the ures, then unknown to the people, into the h vernacular so that men might see them- and their times in the light of God's revela- But when the bishops learned of Tyndale's they became so embarrassed at the prospect ng exposed by God's Word that they tried le for heresy and had him strangled at the in 1536.

Truncated Scriptures

er was more embarrassed by the Bible than k even he himself realized. He had his ideolo- Rosenberg and the rest, glossing over, re- reting the Bible, fusing it with the pagan ls of German folklore to make it a good piece zi propaganda-literature. But there were al- those in Germany who knew the Bible and t clearly. Those who insisted on reading the as it is, Hitler threw into concentration

v does the Bible embarrass us? One afternoon fall of 1949 I happened to be browsing in the tore of one of America's leading universities. ves fell on a small book which claimed to be version of the Bible. Intrigued by its small- I opened it to read the introduction. I soon e engrossed. The writer declared that he was to write the introduction to a version of the from which had been deleted all sections that barrassing to a 20th century Christian. "Here t," he wrote, "is a Bible which does not em- s me."

that good, I asked myself. Paging rapidly gh this little volume, I discovered that its ed- ad eliminated the miraculous, much of the etical and anything else which did not con- mmediately to what he considered the modern standing of life and the world.

is gone the sting of God's judgment upon us, rust of the divine into the human, the chal- of God that we aspire to be like him. So the becomes just another book, another record od deeds, another report of what men have ed and reasoned—interesting to read but not esting importance.

uld have been cross with the editor of that truncated Bible. But he taught me a lesson. He has only done in print, I said to myself, what we all do in our lives every day. Not with a penknife like Jehoiakim but with the scissors of indifference you and I snip away at the Bible, a little here, a little there. We take what we like and leave the rest to the smoldering fires of ignorance.

I have heard it said, "I like the poetical sections and the Sermon on the Mount, but I don't care for the rest." Or, "I understand the parables, but I reject the miracles of Jesus. Paul's letters do not interest me and I don't follow some of the teachings of Jesus on the treatment of one's enemies."

Word of the Living God

But if we talk that way, we shall live that way, as though we did not need to take the Bible seriously. Then the Bible will become for us no more than a treasure house for aphorisms and wise sayings. We shall regard it as a good book from which to quote. Every man with an ax to grind—whether in business, labor, politics or whatever—will, like the devil, find in the Bible a Scripture passage to suit his purpose. Novelists will use it as a good source of catchy titles for their latest books. It will be bound in white for nurses at graduation and for brides to carry with ribbons and an orchid; it will be bound in morrocco to lie on rich men's desks; it will be sold in the dime stores to lie in poor men's homes as a good-luck piece and a sign of respectability. But who will read it seriously as the Word of the living God, that cuts down and that raises up, that judges and that challenges, that destroys what you are and creates what you must be—who will?

We all have Bibles that don't embarrass us. Is that good? It is not. It is not good because with the sting of embarrassment goes our faith in God's power to articulate his love and judgment in our minds. What embarrassed Jehoiakim that day of his Bible-burning—and this is something which he perhaps did not himself understand—was not Jeremiah ultimately but the possibility that Jeremiah *did* speak for the living God, the possibility that there is a living God who manages to get himself across to men and women in one way or another.

Scripture Can Speak to Us

Jeremiah, along with Isaiah, Zechariah and all the prophets, was not teaching that any mere book —any mere combination of words in any language, written by any man—can contain the judgment and love of the eternal God, but that the words of the Scriptures are the attempts of honest men who revered God and lived for him to express their conviction that God is exactly more than man's finite wisdom can express. The authenticity of their writings is in no way so well attested as in their confident expectation that God would one day come in person to supersede their words and give them content.

In front of Trinity Church in Boston there stands the statue of Phillips Brooks. Behind the figure of the great New England minister, Christ is portrayed, standing with his hand on Brooks' shoul-

(Continued on page 16)

Rome and Bethlehem

By Hunter Beckelhymer

Luke 2:1-7.

THE year 142 B.C. was a year of triumph for the Jewish people in Palestine. Their twenty-five years of guerrilla warfare against their Syrian masters had been successful. One of their own people, Simon Maccabee, now reigned in the dual role of king and high priest in Jerusalem. Simon with his father and four brothers had led the Jewish underground for a generation in their fight for independence. He was the only one of his family who survived to see the day of victory. After Simon took Jerusalem, the Syrians surrendered the rest of Palestine to him. It looked as though Israel might become a great religious state once more. Perhaps from the house of Maccabee the Messiah would come. These were days when nationalism and religion were both embodied in one leader.

The Roman World

Under Maccabean rule, Jewish hopes ran high for a long time. Simon was soon assassinated, but his son, John Hyrcanus succeeded him. Hyrcanus even annexed a few of Israel's neighbors during his thirty-year reign. More remarkable yet, he managed to stay alive long enough to die of natural causes. But then things really went to pieces as his heirs quarreled over the throne. All trace of the religious idealism of the early Maccabees vanished. The descendants murdered each other in their fight for position and power. They reverted to small-bore military tyrants. In 64 B.C., less than eighty years after Simon won Jewish independence, Israel was in civil war. The two sides were led by two of Simon's great-grandsons.

In 63 B.C. Rome got tired of all this nonsense, and sent General Pompey to Jerusalem to restore order. He did, and thus ended Jewish independence. In 47 B.C. Julius Caesar appointed a Roman procurator to keep order in Palestine. Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C., and a year later the Maccabees tried to make a comeback and killed the procurator Caesar had appointed. In 37 B.C. the Roman senate named the son of the murdered procurator to be king of Judea. With the help of Mark Antony he overthrew and killed the last Maccabe and asserted his kingship of Judea. He was a fello by the name of Herod.

But things were not well with Rome either. Sh was too corrupted to continue as the republic sh once was. After Julius Caesar was killed there wa a scramble for power in Rome too. Twice the pow was shared by a triumvirate of three generals. Bu that would not work in those days either. Each tim one of them disposed of the others. In 31 B.C. th power was in the hands of a single military dictato named Octavian. He was Rome's first emperor, an took for himself the grandiose title Caesar Au gustus.

At that time these events were neither quaint no musty. This was world history at that time. Th was the main tent of human civilization in thos days. In one century the Jews had risen and falle as an independent nation, and the Roman republ had become a dictatorship. Rome was the world greatest power of its day, and its government wa one man—Caesar Augustus.

> In those days a decree went out from Caesar August that all the world should be enrolled. . . . And all went be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also we up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because h was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled wi Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while the were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And sh gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because the was no place for them in the inn.

Strife in the Western World

In 1809 the eyes of the world were on a cock little Frenchman by the name of Napoleon. Th was a period of important battles. The British nav victory at Trafalgar was just past, and Waterlo was just ahead. In the meantime Napoleon wa having his way on the continent. He too was military dictator—an emperor—seeking to dupl cate the empire of Rome. He almost did it, too. Th continental armies—Prussian, Austrian and Polis —could not stop him. Nor could the Russians, o his way to Moscow. Napoleon's activities were o the center of the stage of the western world at tha time. The fate of civilization appeared to be his t decide in 1809.

But in that same year at Liverpool the fourth so was born to a Scotch merchant named John Glad stone. He named the baby boy William. That sam year in the Anglican rectory at Somersby, Englan

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lfred Tennyson first lifted his voice. In a parson-ge in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a dour Calvinist inister added—almost as an afterthought—two ords to his lengthy entry in his diary for the day: Son born." The name was Holmes. The baby was ie first Oliver Dendell Holmes. In 1809 in Shrews-ury, England, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Darwin an-ounced the birth of their son Charles. On that ery same day in a log cabin in Kentucky a baby oy was born to Tom and Nancy Lincoln. They amed him Abraham. A few days later into a cul-ured home near Warsaw, Poland, Frederic Chopin as born. That same year in the home of a Jewish anker in Hamburg, Germany, Felix Mendelssohn rrived. And in Durham, England, Elizabeth Bar-tt breathed her first breath.

In the late 1850s and early 1860s our own coun-y was torn by strife. All politicians, good and bad, nd statesmen, major and minor, were giving it ieir minds and voices. One issue was what preroga-ves and powers belong to the federal government nd which belong to the states. Another issue was hether some men should be allowed to keep other ien as slaves. The survival of our country hung on iese issues. So did the future of the Negro people i America. Sentiments were fever high. States and tatesmen were picking their sides for imminent ar.

When armies in blue and in gray took to the field o settle these matters, all eyes were watching the attlefields. No one knew—or cared—what was oing on in the cabins of the slaves themselves. ut near Hales Ford, Virginia, a tiny mulatto boy as running around half naked in the cabin of his lack slave mother. He answered to the name ooker. The last name—entirely arbitrary—was Vashington. At Diamond Grove, Missouri, there as another scrawny pickaninny who was one day o be swapped for a horse valued at three hundred ollars or so. His name was George Washington arver.

Unsuspected Treasure

William Stidger tells this believable story. When ie owner of one of the diamond mines of South frica stumbled upon one of the world's finest dia-onds, the size of a small lemon, he was confronted ith the problem of transporting it back to the ain office in London. Its value was fabulous; news its discovery would leak out, and lawless men ould like to have it. He selected four trustworthy en, armed them well, and handed them a small cked strongbox. They were to take it to London, ot letting it out of their sight. Two were to stand atch while two slept. When they got it overland o the coast, they were to take a certain ship which ad a special safe installed. At the far end of the urney similar precautions and protection and fan-re attended the package to its destination. The hole thing was about as safe and about as con-icuous as a pickup and delivery by Brinks today. Vhen the men in the London office and a few reened guests opened the box with eager expec-tion—for they had been notified of its coming—ey were baffled to find in it only a small lump of coal. A few days later the real diamond arrived, wrapped in cotton batting, cardboard box and brown paper, by parcel post. The finder had decided to send it that way without even notifying the postal authorities of its value. The post office service, day in and day out, dependably handled whatever mail was entrusted to it. The finder decided to entrust this most valuable gem to that method of delivery.

We watch the wrong shows, don't we! We are feverishly occupied where the pomp, and parades, and fireworks are. So often the things that come that way prove in the end to be lumps of coal, or ashes. All the while God has sent the gems of greatest price in plain wrapping through commonplace means like parcel post.

Was the destiny of the Negro in America determined on the battlefields at Gettysburg and Richmond, or at the peace table at Appomattox? Partially. But I feel that it was determined more in that cabin near Hales Ford, Virginia, when that slave mother delivered her little boy. Booker T. Washington lived to help liberate his people from ignorance and superstition. And while the guns were still blasting in 1864, a real diamond arrived in that other slave hovel at Diamond Grove. George Washington Carver lived to liberate Dixie economically by rediscovering her natural resources. He did more than any other one man to raise in the world's respect his entire race.

Parenthesis in History

And Napoleon! Generals and historians today enjoy analyzing his strategy and exposing his lack of foresight with the supercilious wisdom of hindsight. He is grist for the novelist's mill—and Hollywood's. He hypnotized the western world with his exploits in 1809, and bled a continent white. Now historians say of his career and works that they are all a great parenthesis in history—an interruption with no lasting significance whatever. At the center of the whole show was a lump of coal. The gems of great price God concealed in plainer wrappings and sent by a different route. Into homes in Liverpool and Kentucky came babies who had it in them to become Christian statesmen. Into parsonages at Somersby, England, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, came babies who were to speak with the lucid vision and tongue of poetry. To a physician and his wife in Shrewsbury came a baby whose brilliant and honest mind was to contribute through science to man's self-understanding. To families in Warsaw and Hamburg came babies who were to make music that knits men together across boundaries, tongues and years. But who was thinking of babies in 1809? Everyone was either fighting or watching battles.

And that first Christmas! Had there been newspapers in those days, these would have been the recent headlines: "Last of Maccabean Messiahs Assassinated—Herod Restores Roman Order in Rebellious Judea"; "Roman Senate Dissolved—Power in Hands of Three as Civil War Threatens"; "Octavian Holds Empire Reins Alone—Takes Title, Caesar Augustus." How different these "colossal"

events look to us from here. You and I remember Augustus Caesar solely because it was his decree that brought Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The long books of the Maccabees have been dropped from our Bibles, but the Gospel according to Luke is retold in a thousand tongues and in millions of lives. While everyone's attention and interest and loyalties and lives were all tied up in the noisy pageantry of Rome, God quietly put his finger on a manger in Bethlehem.

Greatest Power on Earth

He does it over and over and over. God sends his most precious gifts not by armored truck but by parcel post. They come not via Rome but via Bethlehem—not by way of Jerusalem but by way of Nazareth. Of course we are interested, if not hypnotized, by world events. The headlines stay big and black and compelling. Powerful nations fall and weak nations rise. World figures debate and threaten and predict. The awful power at their disposal has made strong men frightened and smart men confused. But the greatest events of our day are not these. The greatest power on earth is not nuclear or thermonuclear. The Kingdom of God is not coming by war, nor by revolution, nor by treaty; nor is it going to be built by technology. The greatest events of our day, and any day, are in the cradles and cribs. The greatest power of all is the Spirit of God working *on* these human lives *through* other human lives. The Kingdom of God is given to us for the claiming, daily, in our own hearts, in our own homes, in our own work and in our own communities.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

Biblically Embarrassed

(Continued from page 13)

der. It is reported that a working woman, pausing to gaze upon the figures, asked, "Who is that standing behind the great preacher?" Someone told her, "That is Christ." The woman replied, "It doesn't look like Him."

You can say the same about every painting of Christ. How shall we know him and through him the God who sent him? The only authentic picture of Christ is in the Bible. That is why you miss the whole point of the Bible when you make an ethical scrapbook out of it. Martin Luther once called the Bible the cradle for the Christ. Well then, when you and I, though we read the Bible, yet do not read there of the eternal God who comes in the person of Christ to confront us face to face, you and I are not yet reading the Word of God.

The fourth Gospel opens with those startling words: "In the beginning was the Word, and th Word was with God, and the Word was God." The this same Gospel reads, "The Word became fles and dwelt among us." It is not surprising, is i that the Book which God uses as the means to com into your life with his love and judgment in Jesu of Nazareth should be a bit embarrassing?

But there are different kinds of embarrassmen E. Crossley Hunter of Toronto says, "The mos faltering, hesitating and poor speeches I have eve heard have been those of happy grooms attemptin to reply to the toast to the bride." It is true, is not, that when we are confronted by those wh love us, all our sins and shortcomings rise up t mock us? It *is* embarrassing. God too, who is pe fect love, cannot come to us without embarrassin us. Had we rather he not come?

If you have not read the Bible recently—or eve if you have—go at it now with a fresh approach This Christmastime read the Gospel of Mark at single sitting. Next time you read, do the Gospe account in Luke. Get yourself some helps to th understanding of the Bible — the *Westminste Study Bible*, the *Abingdon Commentary* or Good speed's *Story of the Bible*. But when you read, l the Bible speak to you; let it impress you; let embarrass you.

A Pastoral Prayer

ALMIGHTY and most merciful heavenly Fathe for the life thou hast given us, and the jo we have in it, we thank thee. For the world i which we live, rich and abundant; for the hom mediating something of thy love and mercy; fo the church, which as the body of Christ brings th light and truth to needy men—for these and a other mercies, remembered by us or forgotten, w praise thy holy name.

O God, our help in ages past, we pray for greate faith. We wait upon thee for that purpose in li which gives meaning to all our lesser pursuits. W depend upon thee for the sense that underneath u are the everlasting arms. In all our wanderings, b thou near us and undergird us with thy strengt

O God, thou who art our hope for years to com we pray for the hope that endures. Save us fro easy optimism in our day, for we know that th is not sufficient. Save us from all envy and prid for we know that confidence in ourselves alone bound to crumble. Give unto us the hope whic comes from faith in thee; that neither life n death, things present nor things to come can ev finally defeat thy purposes of good.

God of grace and God of glory, cleanse our liv with thy holy love. We acknowledge that as v live only for ourselves, we are doomed to defea But we have known, however dimly, that as w live for thee, and for others through thee, we ha become more than conquerors. Channel thy lo through us more and more, and give us joy in th service. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.-

Warren A. Nyberg, Harron Methodist, Minneapol

Beachhead in Palestine

By Thomas Taylor Faichney

And in that region there were shepherds out in e field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ıd an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and e glory of the Lord shone around them, and they re filled with fear. And the angel said to them, e not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news a great joy which will come to all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a vior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a n for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swadng cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly ere was with the angel a multitude of the heavly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:8-14.

MANY of us can recall D-Day in 1944. We knew that it was coming; but we knew not how r where. The hopes and fears of a free world were ıtered on it. Fearfully we waited. Would the al-d forces get a foothold in Europe? What if it did t succeed? Then it came. It was successful. A achhead was established in Normandy. It was e beginning of the end. Not the end, as so many our men well knew in the hard fighting which cceeded it, until the Rhine was crossed. But it s the beginning of the end.

I have used as my text the story of the invasion the eternal order into the temporal—of God's Day, when a beachhead was established in Pales-e.

I wonder if the saints in glory felt then as we l in 1944. If they said, as they looked on the rld situation, "God will, God must invade the rld of men." And did they ask, "But how, and en and where?" Then, when all the converging ces were focused, when the time was ripe, in the rkness of the night, night was turned to day, with e invasion of angelic song, "Glory to God in the ghest and on earth peace." God established a beachhead in our world at Bethlehem in Jesus Christ our Lord. That beachhead was not an end, but it established the pattern of God's strategy for world conquest, the projection of the good will of God bringing peace to men, who themselves become the projection of that good will.

Desire of All Nations

That invasion of God had to come. From earliest days men have been haunted by the dream of a warless world: "Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furl'd,/In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world." And a world at peace was conditioned by the conquest of evil and the triumph of good.

In this instinctive aspiration is man reaching after an estate which he has lost? One might almost think so. God is the author of peace and the lover of concord. At the first God brought cosmos out of chaos. "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep . . . And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." Augustine articulated that aspiration for unity: "Thou hast made us for thyself and our souls are restless till they find their rest in thee." Is this a haunting vision of the very nature of man and of God? If such is the case, then man will seek for and be satisfied with nothing less; and being in the very nature of the eternal, it will be realized.

In the pictorial presentation of the fall of man recorded in the early chapters of Genesis, it is evident that something catastrophic happened. From a paradise of peace our first parents were exiled; from the presence and fellowship of a God whom they had refused to trust and whom they had disobeyed. The eyes of man who has lost touch with the spiritual are on the ground. "You are dust, and to dust thou shall return."

Story of the Fall of Man

As the story in Genesis continues, man once in awhile looks back and senses his kinship with the God whom he has lost. But the darkness deepens. The ominous stories of the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah provide the backdrop for that darkness. Isaiah 1 and Romans 1 are more explicit of the depths to which man can go without God, and are far more revealing than any Kinsey report could be. Yes, "Darkness was upon the face of the deep." Yet in this lost world there was an underground force which could never successfully evade the facts

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of life and experience that the ultimate verities were goodness, beauty and truth.

Isaiah was the architect of a new hope. Under a Messiah-King the day would come when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." From Isaiah's day onward to that of our Lord, the hope never was completely lost. It was their V-for-Victory sign. They did not know how but they knew that God's D-Day would come. And come it did when the heavenly hosts sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men." And a beachhead for God was established in Palestine.

God's Design for Living

The composer sat listening as an amateur violinist murdered his composition. After its close the composer took the violin, and from the instrument there poured forth in all its beauty his dream of harmony and composition. Finishing, he added quietly, "That is what I intended." So God took the initiative and in the incarnation he poured forth into our world, at Bethlehem, in Galilee, on Calvary and at the empty tomb, the purity, the beauty and the harmony and power of his own divine quality of life; and in that perfect life of love he said, "That is what I intended when I made man—not as a god but with the regal dignity of a son of God; Man under God with dominion over nature."

There is much talk these days about putting Christ back into Christmas. We shall never do that until we get the proper perspective of the incarnation and of Bethlehem. Bethlehem is the poetic-religious prelude of all that followed in the life of our Lord. The Sermon on the Mount, the disciplined demands of Galilee, the thorny road to Calvary, the cry of desolation on the cross, the risen Lord saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . . . I am with you always." God in that life is saying, "That is what I intended"; and to as many as receive Him, this new quality and interpretation of life as it is meant to be lived, to them he gives power to become the sons of God.

Of All the Things He Began

The Acts of the Apostles simply widen and deepen the beachhead in Palestine. Paul was the Eisenhower of his day. He saw the beachhead in Palestine and its implications for the world; master strategist that he was, he made for the key cities of the Roman world and extended that beachhead until the whole world had been interpenetrated with the new pattern for living—the good news about God; and the Christian Way of Life became indigenous to our world.

Succeeding centuries have continued the story of the widening of that beachhead begun at Bethlehem. Today we recognize the incarnation as God's invasion of love seeking man, the whole man, and man in all life's relationships. To a tottering empire, Rome, it came with new hope. "This new interest which has come into life," said Tertullian. "He has turned all our sunsets into sunrise," said Clemer Social life was cleansed, political life took on ne significance. Ethics now found a standard of l in Jesus Christ. With the consciousness that th is our Father's world, the esthetes looked out on world and found it beautiful; freed from the fea of a demonic world of nature, the scientist beg his investigations which led to the discovery of ne worlds, geographically, geologically and psycholo cally.

Christianity's Advance

The story of the advance of Christianity throu the centuries, in spite of its many setbacks, is glorious story. "Blessings abound where'er H reigns." He has made the desert to blossom like t rose. In this day when men's hearts are failing the through fear of what can happen, now that ma has within his power with the atom and hydrog bomb the abilities of total annihilation, the rel vance of the incarnation must be stressed not on as a way of life but as THE way of life. "There salvation in no one else, for there is no other nar under heaven given among men by which we mu be saved."

The world is not yet won for Christ. In the la decade there have been in North America, cultur defeats which should send the church back to th incarnation to ask wherein we have misinterpret the angels' message of peace and good will amo men.

The Cry of all Creation

Are we ourselves fully won for Christ, or are w content to give him just a beachhead? In your li and mine, he claims "man, the whole man, and ma in all his social relationships." That is the one i creasing purpose of God for all men and for h world. And because it is the purpose of God it w not finally fail of accomplishment, "and he sha reign, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, forev and ever. Amen."

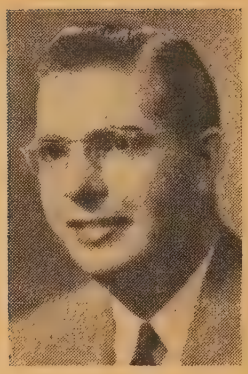
Let me end with the prayer of John Milton:

> Come forth from thy chamber
> O Prince of all the earth
> Put on the visible robes of thine imperial majesty:
> Take up that unlimited scepter
> Which thine almightly Father hath bequeathed thee
> For now, the voice of thy Bride calls thee
> And all creation cries to be renewed.

The Coming

THE intricate crystal of time
Shatters.
The phalanx of dead men speaking to silent childr
Scatters.
The chain of causes falls to
Links.
The stone is struck; the desert
Drinks.

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ.



God at Man's Corner

By William F. Keucher

BUT why, Daddy," the preacher's five-year-old daughter asked, "why do we have to move?" the luncheon table his acceptance of a call to a new ld of service had been a matter of discussion. This ce of news had fallen upon unwelcome ears. Since r best girl friend lived across the street, and she s snug in her little world, why did they have to ve away?

Knowing that her serious question posed an up-ting emotional problem beyond her years, the her sought carefully to find his answer. He nted his daughter to be secure—yet to learn that ch security is best found in seeking and following d's will. He ended his explanation by saying that felt that God had spoken to him and led him to that was what he ought to do. To which his ughter objected, "Yes, but God doesn't talk." using to reflect upon this rebuttal, he recalled a miliar Bible story used in family devotions not g before. "Don't you remember the story of muel?" he inquired. "And don't you remember w God spoke to him while he was in God's use?" "Yes," the five-year-old skeptic rejoined, ut that was in old days."

Age of Skepticism

This uninhibited skepticism may seem embar-ssing to explain, especially when found in a par-nage family. But it points up an inward feeling ich many older people possess but do not express enly. We are somewhat reluctant to wear our epticism on our sleeves. We may persuade our-ves that God spoke to Samuel and to Moses and Abraham and to others in biblical times, and at he guided these men by unseen but infallible odness. But that was in old days! It seems hardly ssible for men to stand today at the gate of a w year and hope that, for the strange way before em, they may have a personal providence guiding em. Discoveries of the vastness of our universe an a different cosmology from early Bible times, and both God and men seem lost to each other, swallowed up in the immensity of space. Surely God is either too busy or too remote to be concerned about the personal life of any single individual. We do not wonder that William Hocking has observed that there is more lostness in our modern world than in any other period of history. Or, as it has been said, "Man has never been the same since God died."

If only we could believe that God may be found behind the shadows, keeping watch over his flock by day and night, because the Shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps! Few of us have such a vivid sense of the personal presence of God that we can say honestly, "I do not know what my future holds, but I know who holds my future." Such an assurance of divine providence is underscored in a modern translation of Pslams 59:10: "My God in his loving kindness will meet me at every corner." Let us look more closely at some of the lessons which this conviction implies.

The Psalmist is confessing a personal need for divine guidance. If he is representative of all men, we may believe that all men have similar needs, recognized or not. Guidance is necessary because of man's nature and the precarious nature of his existence. The once popular notion of automatic progress which inexorably bears man's life upward like an escalator was not born in the Psalmist's world. He would not have argued with a wag who said, "The world's train of progess is not late, there has been a wreck!"

Need for Divine Guidance

His confession admits that there are obvious gaps in man's experience and knowledge. There are places where he has not been and which he has not seen. There are facts beyond his ken. Modern man may know a great deal about phenomena; he knows very little about pneuma. The world without has yielded its secrets one by one, but the world within remains shrouded in mystery. The interior life continues to plague us because from within the heart man speaks and acts. Because of the lag in man's moral experience he stands sorely in need of divine guidance.

A highway tragedy in New York State took the lives of a newly married young couple. They were driving at a fast clip through the night to visit their parents. Their car left the road and overturned, killing both. The highway patrol investigating the accident reported that no mechanical defect had

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been the cause, but that skid marks showed that the young man was "overdriving his lights." At high speed, he came upon an abrupt curve and lost control of his car. "Overdriving his lights" is the cause for man's dark dilemma in his world today. He flies faster than the speed of sound, but he has lost his sense of direction. He can make his voice heard around the world, but he has nothing the world needs to hear. He lives longer, but he is not sure about the purpose or meaning of life.

Lost Travelers

A cartoonist aptly portrays the predicament of modern man, who in his cleverness has conquered the outer reaches of space and unlocked the mystery of the atom. Two apes are looking at the ruins of a great city, now a mass of rubble and debris. Evidently some powerful bomb has leveled the skyscrapers and the smaller buildings. There are no signs of life; there seem to be no survivors. The caption beneath the cartoon has one ape saying to another, "You know, they say that these people were remarkably clever."

Because of subtle defects in his vision and character, man needs divine guidance. With life loose from its moorings in God, man's vantage point is off center; his lens is out of focus. His compass is hopelessly magnetized toward himself. As a result, his calculations involve a basic error in his present position and the compass needle does not afford a true reading of direction.

Dr. Grenfel relates how he responded to an emergency call in the height of a furious storm in Labrador. The compass in his little boat had just been reinstalled, after a factory overhaul. There a thoughtless mechanic had used a metal screw, capable of being magnetized. This blunder almost cost the famous missionary his life, for it was only a kind Providence which spared him from the disaster and death which his faulty compass reading involved. The plight of man is quite as serious. He has lost his way, and he needs a wisdom greater and wiser than his own to intervene. According to the Psalmist this is what God does!

Help in Life's Dark Places

The Psalmist surely implies also that guidance is necessary because of the perplexing nature of man's existence. Sooner or later there will be blind corners around which man cannot see. His daily path will be rudely interrupted by unexpected turns. At the corner of a new year, he is conscious that an untried path lies ahead. Yesterday's light has waned and new light is needed. Last year's energies have been depleted and must be renewed. Vexing frustrations and sharp corners recur with distressing regularity. Our situation is much like that of a newsboy who had a corner where business was always brisk. One day a bigger boy chased him and took over at his stand. The next day the boy was back at his usual stand, but fearful lest he would be bullied away again. When the bigger boy appeared, fully intent on taking over permanently, the little lad jumped on his tormentor. Catching him by surprise, he managed to get him down. Almost simultaneously he began to call for help. "Help, help!" A pedestria paused, smiling amusedly, and queried, "Son, wh are you calling for help? You've got him down "Yeh," exclaimed the newsboy, "but I feel him cor ing up again."

There is that sense in which not merely a ne year but every day reappears. It faces us with petty round of routine events. The ordinary affai of drab daily life chafe and rub. Our response r flects our attitudes and our habits, and thus shap our lives. But even in familiar paths there may l blind corners around which we cannot see. We mu pause at the edge of each day, as at each new yea to acknowledge that man's life is a precarious e istence, that at every corner we need God's lovi presence and wise guidance.

Furthermore, it is because there are tragic corne in man's experience that the Psalmist expresses h need for personal guidance. How often we wish th we might see ahead around the bend in life's wa beyond the limiting horizon of our earthbound vie We can only guess what lies in our path. The stran and sudden turns which unexpectedly appear cau men anxious moments of worry and care. Here is man who stumbles from a life of health to one sickness and pain. The path ahead looks dark a foreboding. There is a blind corner; perhaps ho pitalization and surgery. Or here are reluctant pa ents, loath to see their children step out into strange new path away from the shelter of hom Jung, the psychologist, once said that people spen the first half of their lives afraid of life and the se ond half fearing death. Why should this be s When our road abruptly turns and we hear th roaring of a mighty river rushing through the dar ness, when we cannot see to find our way or get o footing—can we not believe that God in his lovi kindness will meet us at that corner?

Bright Corners

We may be thankful there are other corne which lead not to sadness but to joy, not to dea but to life. Here, for example, is a man who has la for thirty-eight years at the pool of Siloam. One da Jesus comes and says: "Do you want to get well Here is a new corner where God meets him. "S I have no man when the pool is troubled, and wh I am going, another gets there first." What a pictu of a host of people who suffer some crippling hand cap! It may be a withered limb or lameness of so All through life they are pushed aside. Those wh are stronger, those who are quicker, those who a smarter, get there first. How great is the list also-rans! But to them all there come unexpect corners—corners that lead straight into God's pre ence and fullness of life where handicaps are ma tered. It was so with blind Bartimaeus; it was with Zacchaeus; it was so with Mary Magdalen But it was not so with Dives, nor with the rich fo nor with the rich ruler. God came to their corn but, dull and unseeing, unhearing and uncommitte they missed the turn which could have led the into life. Not all corners in a man's life are to feared; some are to be welcomed; some are to sought. Men need most of all to reach a corn

hich leads them to their true destiny and their ghest glory.

Another major lesson which this verse infers is iat guidance is possible. "My God in his loving indness will meet me at every corner." This seems most too good to be true. What is the ground of ie Psalmist's assurance that God is interested in is life and offers unfailing guidance? What is his ope that divine guidance and providence are both ossible and dependable?

Life's Meaning

In passing, let us note that the two factors which ake guidance necessary are present here to make possible. Guidance is possible because of the nature of man and the nature of man's existence. Man fallible and ignorant, but he is an immortal soul. hough he may need to be "spoonfed with truth," e has a capacity for such rich nurture. As the reek word for man signifies, he is an upward looking creature, whose life is illumined by a light which ghtens every man coming into the world. He has a hord which lies deep in his nature, which vibrates nly to the sound of God's voice. Man needs guidnce because he is a man, but he may have it for iat selfsame reason.

Moreover, the nature of man's existence also akes divine guidance possible. This is a meaningul world. As Browning says, it is no blot nor blank; means intensely and it means our good. The orld is not an orphanage, nor is the universe a achine. There is a saving purpose which as God's ill is operative in human history and affords purose to man's being and living. The end of the world not finis but *telos*. Since there is a goal and a rize to be grasped, we must expect a gracious rovidence to offer his guidance to men. In an rdered world there is a meaning in every event; othing walks with aimless feet.

But though this is an important part of the truth, ot to be overlooked, the Psalmist founds his hope n a higher level. "My God," he exults, "in his lovng kindness will meet me at every corner." His ssurance of the wisdom and sufficiency of divine rovidence is to be found in the nature and chacter of God. Since God is related by character and ovenant to Israel, and since He has a gracious urpose for his people, the Psalmist must believe in personal Providence, adequate for every need.

Love's Persistent Search

The New Testament offers similar hope: "There is othing in life and there is nothing in death which able to separate us from the love of God in Christ esus." If men being evil know how to give good ifts to their children, how much more God, our eavenly Father, will. Argue from the best of huan fathers, measure his concern and his desire for is son; raise all of that to the heights beyond nagination and you begin to sense how greatly od yearns for our highest good. He plans and cares r his own. Is man's way dark? God is light. No ne who follows him need walk in darkness, but ay have light for life. In life, growth and progress re possible. Since God is love, we may yield ourselves fully in trust where we cannot see. Whatever our way, he knows our frame and the way we take.

William Allen White in his autobiography tells the story of a boyhood friend and playmate, Temple Friend, who was kidnaped by the Indians when about one year of age. Temple's grandfather was an itinerant missionary to the Indians. He persisted in his faith that his grandson was alive. Coming to an Indian village, he made it a practice to line up all the boys near the age of his grandson. Whispering quietly in the ear of each boy so as not to startle him, he repeated the name of his grandson, "Temple, Temple." Time went by and his faith seemed hopeless. About eight years later, he came to an Indian village remotely situated from his usual circuit. There were about a dozen boys eight to ten years of age. Gathering them together as he had done many times before, he once more whispered in the ear of each boy the name of his grandson Temple. At the middle of the line, one boy's face lighted up suddenly, and he responded, "Me, Temple!" No explanation can be satisfactorily given as to how, across the intervening years since his kidnaping at such an early age, this boy retained the memory of a name long unheard. But the story reveals both the capacity of a heart to remember a heritage and the persistent search love makes for its own. Because of man's nature and the nature of his existence, but primarily because of the nature and character of God, the Psalmist may say, "My God in his loving kindness will meet me at every corner."

No man can ever be the same once he gains faith to believe that the Lord is in his corner. Whether it is the corner of a new year or of a new day, the corner of a new test or a new trial, or the corner of a new life, acknowledge your need and your dependence and claim this promise: "My God in his loving kindness will meet me at every corner."

MEMO

(Continued from page 3)

the altar flowers ready—they were murdered. The seminary boys, wearing Red Cross badges and trying to help, were smashed into the streets. The church leaders who had moved so fast to cleanse the temple, who had worked so hard on sermons and prayers for the great day—they are hunted and doomed.

This is not the end. If we thought for a moment that it were, then better we all give up. For that would mean that black evil can speak the last word, and all good effort would then be engulfed in context of ultimate failure. But this bestial tyranny will not win. These beloved humans are gone, but humanity will come back. The thanksgiving services have been postponed, but when they finally are held, part of the gratitude to Almighty God will be for the valor and foolishness of great, unknown Christians who flung themselves away on November 4 so that treacherous masks would be stripped off and the truth, so terrible to see, could no longer be missed. T.A.G.

Among Us—

The Preacher's Sin

By Orva Lee Ice

WE sat on the veranda of the cottage overlooking Lake Conesus. It was the evening after a day of fishing, swimming or of nothing-to-do unless you wanted to. We were on vacation. Red and Gabe had come down from Rochester for the afternoon. They were old fraternity brothers and charter members of the bull sessions we used to have. Tuck and his wife, Chris, had been with us for a few days. He had a hardware business in East Orange, as he said, "selling hardware at soft prices." Suds and Chris had gone out canoeing.

Red started it. "Doc, what would you say is the number one sin of preachers?"

Questions and Answers

I was considering what to say to this surprising question when Gabe broke in: "Laziness, I'd say! Everyone is just as lazy as he dares to be and ministers are the most daring. I remember old Elder Zimmel; he lived next door to us when I was a kid. He was pastor of Calvary Church. It was the largest church in Clayborne; always in debt, with a handful of the faithful trying to keep it alive. I used to deliver milk to the elder mornings on my way to school. That was about 8:15. The schoolhouse was right across the street and at recess that milk was still sitting there in the sun. I used to worry for fear it'd turn."

"Maybe the good man was at his prayers," suggested Red.

"Maybe, but I think Doc here would agree with me that you can't make prayer a substitute for work."

"Well," defended Red, "it takes time to get up a sermon. I know it'd take me a darn long time."

Gabe was after this point like a bird dog. "I suppose it would take time to get up something original every Sunday, but they don't have to do that. One winter the parsonage next door caught fire. The parson had overslept and the fire had gone out. He tried to rebuild it with kerosene and just about burned up the place. People ran in and carried things out. They brought the elder's books over into our parlor. I remember several of the books were annuals-like, published by a religious press. In these books were sermons for each Sunday in the year, prayers written in and even the hymns all picked out."

"Couldn't be much good," commented Red.

"Good enough for Zimmel. He used them. Books were all marked up, anyway."

Laziness or Piety

"So you think laziness?"

"You take golf, time for baseball games—all preachers get season passes—conventions, chance to get up any time you want to and six weeks vacation. It's laziness, I'd say."

Tuck spoke up: "I'd say laziness is a good guess, all right. But how about professional piety, the pious face, the unctuous tone? It's bad enough in the pulpit when the preacher sort of sings his sermon, but sometimes when I meet him on the street I want to hide from his holiness."

Red and Gabe laughed.

"We had a little preacher back home who came down the street trailing clouds of piety and he'd greet you with, 'Bless the Lord! How's your heart, brother?' "

"Well," nodded Gabe, "I've met that type. I think preachers miss the boat when they take a pious attitude, a pose to get credit for being so very good; when they talk down from such a righteous position to others whom they believe to be lost. It must be somewhat contemptible to God, because it is to a great many people."

Professional Problem

"Doc, what do you think is the biggest sin of ministers?" asked Red. "You're a preacher. We haven't heard from you yet!"

"Well, I've been thinking. In spite of Gabe's reference to golf, I'd say you have both laid out two pretty good balls on the fairway. Laziness and piousness are two faults of a great many clergymen. I'd like to throw out another for consideration — professional jealousy. Guess you have that in most professions, but the problem is acute among ministers. It's rare to meet a preacher who'll give deserving praise to another. When it is given, one wonders if the man truly feels it. Strange how little hearts seem to have more room for jealousy."

"It's a subtle form of praise, jealousy is," ventured Red. "We have it among the officers of our company. I doubt that ministers have a corner on that."

"I suppose not," I agreed. "One thing I might suggest if you want to look into a preacher's heart: I condemn myself for the indulgence of cynicism. I get fed up with all the neat plans to save the world. So many clubs, lodges, committees and organizations out to save the world when the world doesn't want to be saved, especially their way. I get to wondering sometimes if man is worth saving. The world would be easy to save if it weren't for the people in it. You preach your lovely sermons to the people, and, as some wag has said, 'it is like water on a duck's back' or 'it goes in one ear and out the other.' "

Varying Opinions

"What's eatin' the parson?" Christina and Suds had slipped the noiseless canoe into port and come up in the dark.

"O, we're playing a game. It's like questions and answers. Want to play, Chris?" asked Red. "The question is, what's the greatest sin of the preacher?"

"I'd say," replied Christina, "it's trying to act like a big-time Charlie. You know, hail-fellow-well-met, telling funny stories, trying to prove he isn't a holy Joe."

"You see it different than Tuck. He thinks they all try to assume a holier-than-thou attitude."

"Well, anyway," continued Chris, "I've felt sorry for many of them who seem to think they've got to be good mixers, trying to be the life of the party."

"Chris takes her preaching pretty seriously," said her husband.

"If you ask me," broke in my wife, "the preacher's biggest weakness is story-telling all right — little white stories, sort of polite lying."

Common American Trait

"Smile when you say them words, Suds," laughed Gabe. "You can't mean preachers tell lies!"

"Maybe prevaricating then, Mr. Prestley. You know, when they try to impress others about how much salary they get, how big their church budget is, how many attended services the previous Sunday! It gets up there pretty close to, well, shall we say, misrepresentation?"

"It's a common disease, my lady," ventured Red. "It's the common disease of American life. Exaggeration is the mumps of business."

"Yeah," agreed Tuck, "we're exposed to that at every hardware convention."

"What's this? I thought we were trying to find the chief sin of clergymen. Now the hardware salesmen have this plague too. Maybe we all have it . . ."

"Look out, Suds! Maybe the taint is even on you," laughed Chris.

"Well, I know preachers—" I began to sit small as Suds continued—"I know

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ORVA LEE ICE *became minister of Calvary Baptist Church at Minneapolis in 1945 after a thirteen-year pastorate at Pittsburgh, where he had a wide audience through weekly radio programs. He is a graduate of Colgate Rochester Divinity School and author of* Tomorrow Is Yours *and* A Candle for the Dark.

reachers who tell the experiences of her people as though they had had em themselves. They'll use other min-ters' illustrations and personalize iem. They'll preach other preachers' rmons and give no credit. I still say ieir worst sin is, well prevaricating, that's the way you want it."

"So, I guess everybody . . ," started Ed, but at that moment the youngsters ame bounding in from the cove where ney had been attending a marshmallow oast. Red's remark was lost in the oise and the question remained unre-olved.

A Winter Prayer

ALMIGHTY God, we pray to thee who hast created us with hunger, ut not left us without food; loneliness, ut not without companionship; fear, ut not without protection; sorrow, but ot without consolation; love, but not ithout loved ones; the haunting sense f eternal things, but not without the evelation of thine everlasting goodness, hich over and around us lies like the aulted blue of a summer sky, obscured or a season by the storm-ridden clouds f winter, but there, even when we do ot see it. We pray with a faith which oes not judge life by its darkest days ut by the eternal Light who was Christ esus, who came that we might know ne springtime of the spirit, and left ith the memorable promise that he ill come again, as surely as the robin ill return and the tulips bloom once nore.

We thank thee for bitterness, in con-rast to which we know sweetness; for ne rough edges which make the smooth eem smoother; for black that stands in old relief against the white; for harsh ords which make love's song more ondrous; for tears which send us in earch of words for laughter; for death hich makes life more precious; for oubt which lifts on wings of faith.

We thank thee for thy purifying love nd pray for deliverance from evil hich leaves us unsuited for heavenly ings. We pray for others, knowing ll well that it is not by our compassion nat others receive thy grace, but be-ause it is thy will that we should con-ur with thee in what thou hast pre-ared even for our enemies. Bless all en with the mercy to which we so rvently cling, as revealed to us in esus Christ, in whose name we pray. men.—*Maynard D. Smith, Douglas venue Presbyterian Church, Des Ioines, Iowa.*

The Open Bible

A YOUNG man who wishes to re-main a sound Atheist cannot be o careful of his reading. There are aps everywhere—"Bibles laid open, illions of surprises," as Herbert says, ine nets and stratagems." God is, if I ay say it, very unscrupulous.—*C. S. ewis,* Surprised by Joy *(New York: arcourt, Brace). Used by permission.*

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Books Preachers Are Reading

THE LIVING OF THESE DAYS. *By Harry Emerson Fosdick. Harper, 324 pages, $4.00.*

"FROM my youth my problem has been the endeavor to be both an intelligent modern and a serious Christian." This sentence from the prologue neatly catches the atmosphere in which Christian faith must make its way in our generation. It is the key to an understanding of Dr. Fosdick's life and ministry. His grandfather, whose home was the last station on the underground railroad, rowed escaping slaves across the Niagara River to liberty in Canada. So there are many embracing the Christian faith today who could not remain in fundamentalism, and whom Dr. Fosdick has rowed through the waters of skepticism to "freedom to believe."

Nonconformity was in his blood. In 1643 an ancestor was excommunicated for reading unorthodox books. His great-grandfather was driven from the Baptist ministry because "he did not believe in . . . the kind of God who could operate the hell of his generation's orthodoxy." In the 20th century Dr. Fosdick says: "During a long lifetime I have watched this endlessly repeated tragedy, defenders of the faith, presenting the faith in indefensible terms, and alienating the minds they might have won."

He went off to college taking for granted the literal accuracy of the Bible as sound science and history. "The fundamentalists in later years have hated me plentifully, but I started as one of them." Of one period in his college days he writes: "Wild horses could not have dragged me into church; I would have none of it." A man who has been a fundamentalist and later finds himself quite outside the whole circle of the church, when he finally comes down on the side of Christian faith knows how it feels to be on the outside. A complete breakdown in seminary days, with persistent suicide feelings, has been made to yield its fruit in the counseling ministry. Here is laid bare what God can do with these midnights of the soul.

The chapter on "Learning to Preach" is in part every minister's autobiography. Has anyone made preaching more relevant to life than Fosdick?

In 1922 the fire for the fundamentalist controversy was lit by a sermon which made a plea for "a church inclusive enough to take in both liberals and conservatives without either trying to drive the other out." Isn't that a pretty accurate description of the situation which actually exists today in the larger communions?

The idea that Fosdick was the target only of the fundamentalists is natural but erroneous. True, this was the group that described him with such epithets as "a Baptist bootlegger . . . a Presbyterian outlaw . . . the Jesse James of the theological world." But there was also thunder on the left, from the radicals who were demanding that all liberals withdraw from the evangelical denominations, which would have amounted to a surrender of the historic denominations to the fundamentalists. Concerning this no-man's land in which he found himself, Dr. Fosdick says, "I found myself, therefore, raked by fire from two directions—the fundamentalists and the radicals—and which was fiercer I do not know."

In this volume is the whole magnificent story of the Riverside Church, from Fosdick's embarrassment about the Rockefeller wealth to Rockefeller's embarrassment about the Fosdick theology. Here also is the self-portrait of a man big enough to say of his book defending war: "I was never more sincere in my life than when I wrote it, but I was wrong."

The chapter entitled "Winds of Doctrine" is actually a refresher course on the main currents of theological thought in the 20th century. If Dr. Fosdick was the chief critic of fundamentalism, he also wrote plainly of the peril of liberalism. "We were adjusting Christian thought to a secular culture . . . the center of gravity was not in the gospel but in the prevalent intellectual concepts of our time." For saying such things he was accused of deserting the liberal cause! He sums up: "Reactionary liberalism can be as much a failure as reactionary traditionalism."

Writing this autobiography in an election year, Dr. Fosdick reviews the contributions of the major political party which has his sympathies. His internationalism is set forth with passions and there are intimate glimpses of a number of causes to which he has given his strength. Among them are Alcoholics Anonymous, planned parenthood, pacifism, the League of Nations, the race question and low-rent housing. Still vigorous, questioning and questing after nearly four-score years he writes: "Expectancy about tomorrow looms larger than nostalgia about yesterday." There's a sunset view!

This book, like Dr. Fosdick's ministry, will not please everyone, but it will interest and excite anyone who takes it up. Here is autobiography at its best. It should be read by devotees as a kind of last will and testament of their hero. It should be read by critics as a careful and balanced statement of the issues which caused all the shouting. It should be read by those for whom the controversial position of the leading character is still unknown, for they will discover here one of the giants of our time.—*Joseph E. McCabe, Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pa.*

Pulpit Calendar

Dec. 2—1st Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 9—Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 16—3rd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 23—Suday before Christmas.
Dec. 25—Christmas.
Dec. 30—Sunday after Christmas.
Dec. 31—New Year's Eve.
Jan. 1—New Year's Day.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 6-13—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 13—1st Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 20—Missionary Day.
Jan. 20-26—Church and Economic Life Week.
Jan. 27—3rd Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 27-Feb. 3—Youth Week.
Feb. 3—4th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 10—Race Relations Sunday.
Feb. 17—Universal Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 17-24—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 24—7th Sunday after Epiphany.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL. *By David A. MacLennan. Westminster, 128 pages, $2.00.*

THIS book is a published form of the Warrack lectures on preaching delivered in 1955 at the universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen. The lectures will have a worthy place in a distinguished series, but as should be expected they are more than a theological dissertation, or "a chime of words" for "a few discriminating people." They are the work of one who is equally teacher and preacher, and who is skilled both in the scholarly art of homiletics and the practical craft of catching the congregation's attention at the opening sentence and holding it to the end.

An abundance of freshly minted illustration and a rich gleaning from the golden pages of literature may serve to nudge many another minister through inviting gates into good sermonic soil ripe for harvest.—*Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor Street United Church, Toronto, Ont.*

SELECTED LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY. *Edited by Frederick C. Gill. Philosophical Library, 248 pages, $4.75.*

THERE is something intimate about reading another's correspondence even in a published work. When the other person happens to be John Wesley, this intimacy is especially rewarding. Too much of our reading has been

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HARPER & BROTHERS, N. Y. 16

about Wesley. Here we are reading Wesley himself, in unguarded personal expressions as well as more formal communications.

The letters span 70 years of Wesley's life and cover every conceivable subject from how to stop nosebleed to how to find personal salvation. The reader will pity the frailty of a man so unfortunate in love and marriage, and he will thrill to the greatness of one who sought in many ways to find and do "the perfect will of God."

The key word in the title of this book is the first—"Selected." Here in one volume are 275 Wesley letters chosen from the 2,670 in John Telford's standard edition of eight volumes (Epworth Press, 1931). There is a general introduction by the editor, and most of the letters are preceded by a brief explanatory paragraph giving pertinent information to the reader. In some cases the longer letters are abbreviated.

Dr. Gill has, in a sense, done much work for us. While some of the many Wesley letters are priceless, others are of little interest to the present-day minister. Seminary schedules and the demands of a full-time pastorate are such that few students and fewer active ministers have time for wading through three thousand letters to select the few hundred worth remembering. Dr. Gill, aided by his years of study and writing about Wesley, has done this reading and selecting for us.

It is not enough to say that this book will be a valuable addition to the libraries of Methodists. It will prove fascinating to all Christians whose appreciation of great men and ideas goes beyond the narrow limits of their own communion.—*Robert Paul Sessions, Methodist Church, Booneville, Ark.*

BY THE POWER OF GOD. *By Samuel M. Shoemaker. Harper, 158 pages, $2.00.*

DR. Shoemaker has succeeded in making this a charming and alarming book. Modest about his own role in changing lives, he tells of spiritually inadequate personalities who were transformed by the power of God; but doubtless the author's own Christian spirit had much to do with winning to a greater vision of the Kingdom the sophisticated and privileged group described in his chapter "The Younger Marrieds Catch Fire." This is a vivid illustration of what he has done all through his pastorates.

In chapters about the church the book becomes more alive. It jolts us with contrasts between the actual and the ideal. Dr. Shoemaker is alarmed at the weaknesses of the present-day church, for which he blames both clergy and laity. He says, "I am completely dissatisfied with the way the church is failing to measure up to its spiritual opportunities." But he is "completely satisfied with the sufficiency of Christ and the Christian faith, and therefore with the message the church has been given to proclaim."

This book has power. Simply and persuasively written, it contains anecdotes which show the wide range of its author's knowledge of people and books. Many a preacher will be unable to resist quoting them in his sermons. Often the book sparkles with epigrams as for instance, "We are not fated to be small, we are just contented to be small." Altogether it offers gratifying testimony to the fact that by the power of God lives can be transformed toward the likeness of Christ.—*Allen Keedy, First Congregational, Norwood, Mass.*

THE BURDEN OF THE LORD. *By Ian Macpherson. Abingdon, 157 pages, $2.75.*

THE burden of the Lord to a modern ministry is interpreted here through four divisions: Burden, Man, Craft and Encounter. The author accounts for sermon content and message; for the character of the preacher, morally, spiritually and intellectually; for skill and craftsmanship; finally, for performance.

Writing of content, he is emphatic in making Christ the one and only substance worthy of the pulpit, reminding the reader of Philippians 3.

Reading the discussion of Man, this reviewer was disposed to think that the many examples of character taken from the big preachers of the past are of slight help to the contemporary minister, for these men of past renown were

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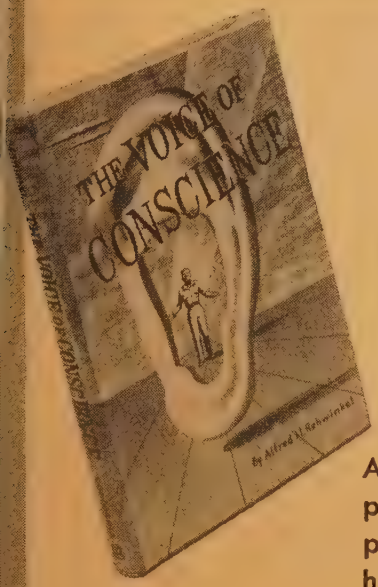

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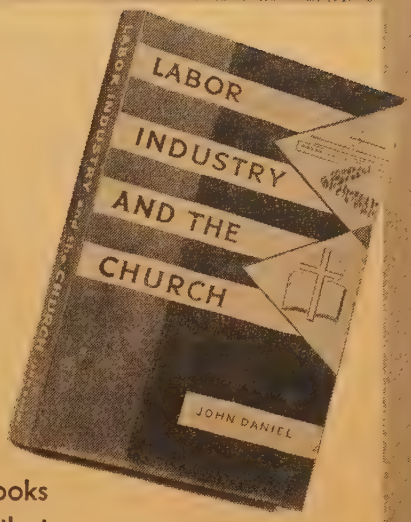

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themselves *sui generis*, too unique to be cited as examples to be followed. Could not a chapter with the same intent be made both fresher and more helpful if the preacher as artist were illustrated rather by examples of the great artists? One fine sentence in this chapter affirms that all the best preachers have a "breath of eternity about them."

A recent editorial in the London *Times Literary Supplement* says "Congregations should be rebuked fo looking to the pulpit for a mere exer cise in art, or performance, or even in tellectual stimulus, and be reminde that sermons should be listened to i the spirit of humility." Macpherso says much the same in his chapter o craftsmanship when he argues for text, for the exposition of the text in proper context, for the development o the theme as required by the text, an finally, for telling the congregatio what they should do about it! His for mula is somewhat of the mechanical va riety to be found any Sunday morning but he keeps sight of the main object to get over to the congregation "th burden of the Lord."

In the last section on Encounter, th problem of communication is faced an the question asked, Does communica tion in the 20th century require specia qualifications? The conclusion is tha with imagination the preacher can s identify himself with the thinking o men around him that the Word wil touch heart and mind, whatever th milieu may be. And if the preache submits the whole of his preparation t the judgment of Christ, that prepara tion can be so transformed that Christ the Word, will touch the spirit in man —*George Lang, Department of Philos ophy, University of Alabama.*

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The chapters on how we got the Old Testament are most excellent. He includes the Apocrypha in his treatment.

In pleading for study of the whole Bible he appeals that we "let the Scriptures speak to us, which means, be silent, and let God speak." Further on he says, "Read the Bible as you would any other book, and you will discover how unlike it is to any other."

The pages are bound so as to be comfortable to hold, and the type is easy on the eye. How odd that the proof reader failed to notice that the top line of page 158 belongs eighteen lines further down.—*James V. Claypool, Secretary, Promotion of Bible Use, American Bible Society.*

ood Morning, y Fellow Actors

(Continued from page 11)

icular talent for acting. I well re- having dinner some years ago with rs. MacArthur. A small, rather woman, Mrs. MacArthur im- ed me with her lilting speech and the way she held her head—like a n, I thought. She obviously did the non things uncommonly well. And as only when dinner was finished I discovered I was eating with n Hayes, whose secret is surely she does the ordinary things with ordinary grace. So, if your talent ch a small thing as speaking with m or standing gracefully, do not *down* on it, but look *up* to its t potentialities as it is used in the ice of God.

econd, our common worship takes a new dimension. For if we are rs together before God, the service ot be a program but must be a ual sharing of hopes and fears, tri- hs and failures. With God scrutin- g our interior selves we can main- no barriers between each other, for lives are openly accountable.

t the center of such a shared fellow- is not the pulpit, nor the altar, nor cross, nor even the Bible, but the e of fellowship. Gathered around it an share frankly all that is bright, hat is dark in our lives. We leave table cleansed, refreshed.

he sermon, then, is not a word of gment nor a speech but rather an lysis of the script for the act with ch most people need help. How de- sing it is for the minister to hear comments made by well-intentioned ple on Sunday morning: "That was ce sermon," "A good sermon, Doc- " and so on! Nothing else can give minister quite such a sense of fail- as this. For if he has made a helpful lysis of the script, thoughtful people say, "I need more briefing on this . When could a group of us meet n you to discuss it?" Or else, "You e me a new slant on the church. at can I do for it?" Or yet, "How I gain the strength or the insight you speak of?" Only such response he sermon can give the minister a se of accomplishment—and only response will enable minister and nan to continue their acting out 's script.

inally, the meaning of your own life es on a new dimension. For if your n function in life is to play out your acccording to God's script, your y action must fit into this pattern. ne years ago a play was written to w what might happen if all the great rs who had played Shakespeare's *nlet* came together. Here were Gar- , Booth, Huston, Barrymore and ers, each having stressed one facet he many-sided Hamlet. Each had d his part in accordance with the e conventions and the audience ber of his time. Yet the inevitable erion God will apply to your per- formance will be, "How adequately did you represent the essential character of Christ? Does his spirit, his love, his compassion, his sternness, his power become alive in you?" You see, God is alert to how you read the script, and he is forever asking, "How goes the drama?" *(Turn to next page)*

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

You Just Know He Is

"BUT why 'pastoral'?" My wife's sudden question came just as I was attaching a double-nine for a count of 45 in a prebedtime game of dominoes —yes, we prefer dominoes and scrabble to either radio or television as a prelude to "settling our brains for a long winter nap." I was startled, but it was easy to pick up the threads, for a bit earlier we had been speaking of a preacher who had been expatiating on his "so heavy pastoral duties," especially "the fatiguing chore of pastoral calls in hospitals."

Friend Among Friends

The query, in front of our blazing hearth, was a pertinent one. Why "pastoral"? Why must we so constantly act and talk and look like preachers? Perhaps I should emend the last word to read either "ministers" or "clergymen," for with the plethora of new duties—pastoral counseling in all its ramified forms, at the moment including a brand new course of clerical training as white-coated hospital orderlies, is rivaling the earlier great must, *viz.*, the conduct of (nearly) sermonless worship services—preaching seems fast becoming one of the lesser skills, to use the language of the contemporary linguistic gutter. Why must our calls on our people, in hospital or home, be "pastoral"? Why can't they be simply friendly? When they are the latter, they can be—and I don't think I am sounding forth only one man's narrow and jaundiced view —very welcome; when they are the former, they tend to be both professional and, to me at least, highly offensive. To be sure, many ministers have finally awaked to the fact that a punctilious and so often utterly artificial bedside, or fireside, prayer, ere they move ponderously on to the next victim of their pastoral concern—a sort of out-of-church surrogate for the in-church benediction and choral amen—is by no means an invariable must. Nevertheless you just know they are preachers!

I trust that this little interlude will not be misunderstood. I am a great believer in the value of calls. The minister who is not often in the homes of his people, I am convinced, is losing a tremendous opportunity. That, by way of aside, is one of my reasons for deploring congregations of such a size that the minister cannot come to know his people in any degree of intimacy. But when he calls, let him come as a friend among friends, not as a holy man pe forming a holy office.

Why, and the question is no rheto cal one, why must ministers stick copy of their church calendar in eve letter that they write, be said letter o to a man who has just lost his wife; the President of the United Stat either commending him for his pun tilious attendance of church on Sund or deploring his equally devout atten ance on the golf links; or to the age of the insurance company, along wi his belated check for last month's pr mium? Such calendars are a high useful tool for a worshiping congreg tion, and may well be of interest absent members and those living now a distance. But when indiscriminate stuck into every letter that leaves minister's desk, they simply reveal t justice and insight that provoked t companion question during the afo mentioned game of dominoes: "W must he always act and talk and lo like a minister?"

Acquired Likeness

A good many protests have appear in one place and another at the high offensive "holy tone," the on-and-o and-oh-how-sweet-and-tender "spir ual smile," and the sundry other lit pulpit antics which seem to many our brethren the necessary indicatio that they are honest-to-goodness "m of God," performing a mighty wo from which they cannot at the insta come down. It is bad enough to have endure these mannerisms during t moments of supposed holy calm; b why must they be inflicted constan day by day?

Ernest may have come eventually look like the Great Stone Face, but was due to a natural growth fr within, not the result of practice bef a mirror. Best of all, he didn't kn that he had acquired that likeness.

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AS the Lord's free people they join themselves (by a covenant of Lord) . . . in the fellowship of the g pel, to walk in all his ways made kno or to be made known unto them, cording to their best endeavors, wh soever it should cost them, the L assisting them. And that it cost th something this ensuing history will clare.—*William Bradford.*

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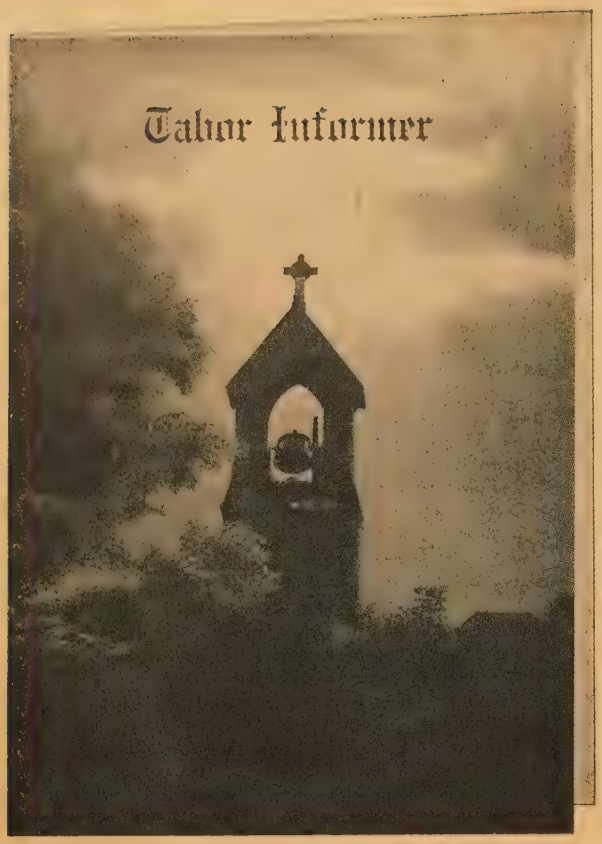

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